PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY, KENILWORTH," &c.

If my readers should at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may be assured there is a design under it."—*British Essayist.*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

We meet, as men see phantoms in a dream,
Which glide, and sigh, and sign, and move their lips,
But make no sound ; or, if they utter voice,
'Tis but a low and undistinguished moaning,
Which has nor word nor sense of utter'd sound.

The Chieftain.

We said, at the conclusion of the last volume, that a female form appeared at the door of Moultrassie-Hall ; and that the well-known accents of Alice Bridgenorth were heard to hail the return of her father, from what she naturally dreaded as a perilous visit to the Castle of Martindale.

Julian, who followed his conductor with a throbbing heart into the lighted hall, was therefore prepared to see her whom he best loved, with her arms thrown around her father. The instant

she had quitted his paternal embrace, she was aware of the unexpected guest who had returned in his company. A deep blush, rapidly succeeded by deadly paleness, and again by a slighter suffusion, shewed plainly to her lover that his sudden appearance was any thing but indifferent to her. He bowed profoundly—a courtesy which she returned with equal formality, but did not venture to approach more nearly, feeling at once the delicacy of his own situation and of hers.

Major Bridgenorth turned his cold, fixed, grey, melancholy glance, first on the one of them, and then on the other. "Some," he said, gravely, "would, in my case, have avoided this meeting; but I have confidence in you both, although you are young, and beset with the snares incidental to your age. There are those within who should not know that ye have been acquainted. Wherefore, be wise, and be as strangers to each other."

Julian and Alice exchanged glances as her father turned from them, and, lifting a lamp which stood in the entrance-hall, led the way to the interior apartment. There was little of consolation in this exchange of looks; for the sadness of

Alice's glance was mingled with fear, and that of Julian clouded by an anxious sense of doubt. The look also was but momentary; for Alice, springing to her father, took the light out of his hand, and, stepping before him, acted as the usher of both into the large oaken parlour, which has been already mentioned as the apartment in which Bridgenorth had spent the hours of dejection which followed the death of his consort and family. It was now lighted up as for the reception of company; and five or six persons sat in it, in the plain, black, formal dress which was affected by the formal Puritans of the time, in evidence of their contempt of the manners of the luxurious court of Charles the Second; amongst whom, excess of extravagance in apparel, like excesses of every other kind, was highly fashionable.

Julian at first glanced his eyes but slightly along the range of grave and severe faces which composed this society—men, sincere perhaps in their pretensions to a superior purity of conduct and morals, but in whom that high praise was somewhat

chastened by an affected austerity in dress and manners, allied to those Pharisees of old, who made broad their phylacteries, and would be seen of men to fast, and to discharge with rigid punctuality the observances of the law. Their dress was almost uniformly a black cloak and doublet, cut straight and close, and undecorated with lace or embroidery of any kind, black Flemish breeches and hose, square-toed shoes, with large roses made of serge ribbon. Two or three had large loose boots of calf-leather, and almost every one was begirt with a long rapier, which was suspended by leathern thongs, to a plain belt of buff, or of black leather. One or two of the elder guests, whose hair had been thinned by time, had their heads covered with a scull-cap of black silk or velvet, which being drawn down betwixt the ears and the scull, and permitting no hair to escape, occasioned the former to project in the ungraceful manner which may be remarked in old pictures, and which procured for the Puritans the term of "prick-eared round-heads," so unceremoniously applied to them by their contemporaries.

These worthies were ranged against the wall, each in his ancient, high-backed, long-legged chair; neither looking towards, nor apparently discoursing with each other; but plunged in their own reflections, or awaiting, like an assembly of quakers, the quickening power of divine inspiration.

Major Bridgenorth glided along this formal society with noiseless step, and a composed severity of manner, resembling their own. He paused before each in succession, and apparently communicated, as he passed, the transactions of the evening, and the circumstances under which the heir of Martindale Castle was now a guest at Moultrassie-Hall. Each seemed to stir at his brief detail, like a range of statues in an enchanted hall, starting into something like life, as a talisman is applied to them successively. Most of them, as they heard the narrative of their host, cast upon Julian a look of curiosity, blended with haughty scorn and the consciousness of spiritual superiority; though, in one or two instances, the milder influences of compassion were sufficiently visible.—Peveril would have under-

gone this gauntlet of eyes with more impatience, had not his own been for the time engaged in following the motions of Alice, who glided through the apartment; and only speaking very briefly, and in whispers, to one or two of the company who addressed her, took her place beside a treble-hooded old lady, the only female of the party, and addressed herself to her in such earnest conversation, as might dispense with her raising her head, or looking at any others in the company.

Her father put a question, to which she was obliged to return an answer—"Where was Mistress Debbitch?"

"She had gone out," Alice replied, "early after sunset, to visit some old acquaintances in the neighbourhood, and she was not yet returned."

Major Bridgenorth made a gesture expressive of displeasure; and, not content with that, expressed his determined resolution that Dame Deborah should no longer remain a member of his family. "I will have those," he said aloud, and without regarding the presence of his guests, "and those only, around me, who know to keep within the sober and modest bounds of a christian

family. Who pretends to more freedom, must go out from among us, as not being of us."

A deep and emphatic humming noise, which was at that time the mode in which the Puritans signified their applause, as well of the doctrines expressed by a favourite divine in the pulpit, as of those delivered in private society, ratified the approbation of the assessors, and seemed to secure the dismission of the unfortunate gouvernante, who stood thus detected of having strayed out of bounds. Even Peveril, although he had reaped considerable advantages, in his early acquaintance with Alice, from the mercenary and gossipping disposition of her governess, could not hear of her dismissal without approbation, so much was he desirous, that in the hour of difficulty, which might soon approach, Alice might have the benefit of countenance and advice from one of her own sex, of better manners, and less suspicious probity, than Mistress Debbitch.

Almost immediately after this communication had taken place, a servant in mourning shewed his thin, pinched, and wrinkled visage in the

apartment, announcing, with a voice more like a passing bell than the herald of a banquet, that refreshments were provided in an adjoining apartment. Gravely leading the way himself, with his daughter on one side, and the puritanical female whom we have distinguished on the other, Bridgenorth himself ushered his company, who followed, with little attention to order or ceremony, into the eating-room, where a substantial supper was provided.

In this manner, Peveril, although entitled, according to ordinary ceremonial, to some degree of precedence—a matter at that time considered as of as much importance as it is now regarded as insignificant—was left among the last of those who left the parlour; and might indeed have brought up the rear of all, had not one of the company, who was himself late in the retreat, bowed, and resigned to Julian the rank in the company which had been usurped by others.

This act of politeness naturally induced Julian to examine the features of the person who had offered him this civility; and he started to

observe, under the pinched velvet cap, and above the short band-strings, the countenance of Ganlesse, as he called himself—his companion on the preceding evening. He looked again and again, especially when all were placed at the supper board, and when, consequently, he had frequent opportunities of observing this person fixedly, without any breach of good manners. At first he wavered in his belief, and was much inclined to doubt the reality of his recollection; for the difference of dress was such, as to effect a considerable change of appearance; and the countenance itself, far from exhibiting any thing marked or memorable, was one of those ordinary visages which we see almost without remarking them, and which leave our memory so soon as the object is withdrawn from our eyes. But the impression upon his mind returned, and became stronger, until it induced him to watch with peculiar attention the manners of the individual who had thus attracted his notice.

During the time of a very prolonged grace before meat, which was delivered by one of the company—who, from his Geneva band and serge

doublet, presided, as Julian supposed, over some dissenting congregation—he noticed that this man kept the same demure and severe cast of countenance usually affected by the Puritans, and which rather caricatured the reverence unquestionably due upon such occasions. His eyes were turned upward, and his huge pent-house hat, with a high crown and broad brim, held in both hands before him, rose and fell with the cadences of the speaker's voice; thus marking time, as it were, to the periods of the benediction. Yet when the slight bustle took place which attends the adjusting of chairs, &c., as men sit down to table, Julian's eye encountered that of the stranger; and as their looks met, there glanced from those of the latter, an expression of satirical humour and scorn, which seemed to intimate internal ridicule of the gravity of his present demeanour.

Julian again sought to fix his eye, in order to ascertain that he had not mistaken the tendency of this transient expression, but the stranger did not allow him another opportunity. He might have been discovered by the tone of his voice;

but the individual in question spoke little, and in whispers, which was indeed the fashion of the whole company, whose demeanour at table resembled that of mourners at a funeral feast.

The entertainment itself was coarse, though plentiful; and must, according to Julian's opinion, be distasteful to one so exquisitely skilled in good cheer, and so capable of enjoying, critically and scientifically, the genial preparations of his companion, Smith, as Ganlesse had shewn himself on the preceding evening. Accordingly, upon close observation, he remarked, that the food which he took upon his plate, remained there unconsumed; and that his actual supper consisted only of a crust of bread, with a glass of wine.

The repast was hurried over with the haste of those, who think it shame, if not sin, to make mere animal enjoyments the means of consuming time, or of receiving pleasure; and when men wiped their mouths and moustaches, Julian remarked, that the object of his curiosity used a handkerchief of the finest cambric—an article rather inconsistent with the exterior plainness, not to say coarseness, of his appearance. He used

also several of the more minute refinements, then only observed at tables of the higher rank; and Julian thought he could discern, at every turn, something of courtly manners and gestures, under the precise and rustic simplicity of the character which he had assumed.

But if this were indeed that same Ganlesse with whom Julian had met on the preceding evening, and who had boasted the facility with which he could assume any character which he pleased to represent for the time, what could be the purpose of his present disguise? He was, if his own words could be credited, a person of some importance, who dared to defy the danger of those officers and informers, before whom all ranks at that time trembled; nor was he likely, as Julian conceived, without some strong purpose, to subject himself to such a masquerade as the present, which could not be other than irksome to one whose conversation proclaimed him of light life and free opinions. Was his appearance here for good or for evil? Did it respect his father's house, or his own person, or the family of Bridgenorth? Was the real character of

Ganlesse known to the master of the house, inflexible as he was in all which concerned morals as well as religion? If not, might not the machinations of a brain so subtle, affect the peace and happiness of Alice Bridgenorth?

These were questions which no reflection could enable Peveril to answer. His eyes glanced from Alice to the stranger; and new fears, and undefined suspicions, in which the safety of that beloved and lovely girl was implicated, mingled with the deep anxiety which already occupied his mind, on account of his father, and his father's house.

He was in this tumult of mind, when, after a thanksgiving as long as the grace, the company arose from table, and were instantly summoned to the exercise of family worship. A train of domestics, grave, sad, and melancholy as their superiors, glided in to assist at this act of devotion, and ranged themselves at the lower end of the apartment. Most of these men were armed with long tucks, as the straight stabbing swords, much used by Cromwell's soldiery, were then called. Several had large pistols also; and the corslets or

cuirasses of some were heard to clank, as they seated themselves to partake in this act of devotion. The ministry of him whom Julian had supposed a preacher, was not used on this occasion. Major Bridgenorth himself read and expounded a chapter of Scripture, with much strength and manliness of expression, although so as not to escape the charge of fanaticism. The nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah was the portion of Scripture which he selected; in which, under the type of breaking a potter's vessel, the prophet presages the desolation of the Jews. The lecturer was not naturally eloquent; but a strong, deep, and sincere conviction of the truth of what he said, supplied him with language of energy and fire, as he drew a parallel between the abominations of the worship of Baal, and the corruptions of the Church of Rome—so favourite a topic with the Puritans of that period; and denounced against the Catholics, and those who favoured them, that hissing and desolation which the prophet directed against the city of Jerusalem. His hearers made a yet closer application than the lecturer himself suggested; and many a dark proud eye intimated, by a glance on Ju-

lian, that on his father's house were already, in some part, realized these dreadful maledictions.

The lecture finished, Bridgenorth summoned them to unite with him in prayer; and on a slight change of arrangements amongst the company, which took place as they were about to kneel down, Julian found his place next to the single-minded and beautiful object of his affection, as she knelt down, in her lowliness, to adore her Creator. A short time was permitted for mental devotion; during which, Peveril could hear her half-breathed petition for the promised blessings of peace on earth, and good will towards the children of men.

The prayer which ensued was in a different tone. It was poured forth by the same person who had officiated as chaplain at the table; and was in the tone of a Boanerges, or Son of Thunder—a denouncer of crimes—an invoker of judgments—almost a prophet of evil and of destruction. The testimonies and the sins of the day were not forgotten—the mysterious murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey was insisted upon—and

thanks and praise were offered, that the very night on which they were assembled, had not seen another offering of a Protestant magistrate, to the blood-thirsty fury of the revengeful Catholics.

Never had Julian found it more difficult, during an act of devotion, to maintain his mind in a frame befitting the posture and the occasion; and when he heard the speaker return thanks for the downfall and devastation of his family, he was strongly tempted to have started upon his feet, and charged him with offering a tribute, stained with falsehood and calumny, at the throne of truth itself. He resisted, however, an impulse which it would have been insanity to have yielded to, and his patience was not without its reward; for when his fair neighbour arose from her knees, the lengthened and prolonged prayer being at last concluded, he observed that her eyes were streaming with tears; and one glance with which she looked at him in that moment, shewed more of affectionate interest for him in his fallen fortunes and precarious condition, than

he had been able to obtain from her when his worldly estate seemed so much the more exalted of the two.

Cheered and fortified with the conviction that one bosom in the company, and that in which he most eagerly longed to secure an interest, sympathized with his distress, he felt strong to endure whatever was to follow, and shrunk not from the stern still smile with which, one by one, the meeting regarded him; as, gliding to their several places of repose, they indulged themselves at parting with a look of triumph on one, whom they considered as their captive enemy.

Alice also passed by her lover, her eyes fixed on the ground, and answered his low obeisance without raising them. The room was now empty, but for Bridgenorth and his guest, or prisoner; for it is difficult to say in which capacity Peveril ought to regard himself. He took an old brazen lamp from the table, and, leading the way, said, at the same time, " I must be the uncourtly chamberlain, who am to usher you to a place of repose, more rude perhaps than you have been accustomed to occupy."

Julian followed him, in silence, up an old-fashioned winding stair-case, within a turret. At the landing-place on the top, was a small apartment, where an ordinary pallet bed, two chairs, and a small stone table, were the only furniture. "Your bed," continued Bridgenorth, as if desirous to prolong their interview, "is not of the softest; but innocence sleeps as sound upon straw as on down."

"Sorrow, Major Bridgenorth, finds little rest on either," replied Julian. "Tell me, for you seem to await some question from me, what is to be the fate of my parents, and why you separate me from them?"

Bridgenorth, for answer, indicated with his finger the mark which his countenance still shewed from the explosion of Julian's pistol.

"That," replied Julian, "is not the real cause of your proceedings against me. It cannot be, that you, who have been a soldier, and are a man, can be surprised or displeased by my interference in the defence of my father. Above all, you cannot, and I must needs say you do not, believe that I would have raised my hand against you

personally, had there been a moment's time for recognition."

"I may grant all this," said Bridgenorth; "but what are you the better for my good opinion, or for the ease with which I can forgive you the injury which you aimed at me? You are in my custody as a magistrate, accused of abetting the foul, bloody, and heathenish plot, for the establishment of Popery, the murther of the King, and the general massacre of all true Protestants."

"And on what grounds, either of fact or suspicion, dare any one accuse me of such a crime?" said Julian. "I have hardly heard of the plot, save by the mouth of common rumour, which, while it speaks of nothing else, takes care to say nothing distinctly even on that subject."

"It may be enough for me to tell you," replied Bridgenorth, "and perhaps it is a word too much—that you are a discovered intriguer—a spied spy—who carries tokens and messages betwixt the Popish Countess of Derby, and the Catholic party in London. You have not conducted your matters with such discretion, but

that this is well known, and can be sufficiently proved. To this charge, which you are well aware you cannot deny, these men, Everett and Dangerfield, are not unwilling to add, from their recollection of your face, other passages, which will certainly cost you your life when you come before a Protestant jury."

"They lie like villains," said Peveril, "who hold me accessory to any plot either against the King, the nation, or the state of religion; and for the Countess, her loyalty has been too long, and too highly proved, to permit her being implicated in such injurious suspicions."

"What she has already done," said Bridgenorth, his face darkening as he spoke, "against the faithful champions of pure religion, hath sufficiently shewn of what she is capable. She hath betaken herself to her rock, and sits, as she thinks, in security, like the eagle reposing after his bloody banquet. But the arrow of the fowler may yet reach her—the shaft is whetted—the bow is bended—and it will be soon seen whether Amalek or Israel shall prevail. But for thee, Julian Peveril—why should I conceal it from thee?—my

heart yearns for thee as a woman's for her first-born. To thee I will give, at the expense of my own reputation—perhaps at the risk of personal suspicion—for who, in these days of doubt, shall be exempted from it—to thee, I say, I will give means of escape, which else were impossible to thee. The staircase of this turret descends to the gardens—the postern-gate is unlatched—on the right hand lie the stables where you will find your own horse—take it, and make for Liverpool—I will give you credit with a friend under the name of Simon Simonson, one persecuted by the prelates; and he will expedite your passage from the kingdom."

"Major Bridgenorth," said Julian, "I will not deceive you. Were I to accept your offer of freedom, it would be to attend to a higher call than that of mere self-preservation. My father is in danger—my mother in sorrow—the voices of religion and nature call me to their side. I am their only child—their only hope—I will aid them or perish with them."

"Thou art mad," said Bridgenorth—"aid them thou canst not—perish with them thou well

may'st, and even accelerate their ruin; for in addition to the charges with which thy unhappy father is loaded, it would be no slight aggravation, that while he meditated arming and calling together the Catholics and High Churchmen of Cheshire and Derbyshire, his son should prove to be the confidential agent of the Countess of Derby, who aided her in making good her stronghold against the Protestant commissioners, and was dispatched by her to open secret communication with the Popish interest in London."

"You have twice stated me as such an agent," said Peveril, resolved that his silence should not be construed into an admission of the charge, though he felt that it was in some degree well founded—"What reason have you for such an allegation?"

"Will it suffice for a proof of my intimate acquaintance with your mystery," replied Bridgenorth, "if I should repeat to you the last words which the Countess used to you when you left the Castle of that Amalekitish woman? Thus she spoke; 'I am a forlorn widow,' she said, 'whom sorrow has made selfish.'"

Peveril started, for these were the very words the Countess had used; but he instantly recovered himself, and replied, "Be your information of what nature it will, I deny, and I defy it, so far as it attaches aught like guilt to me. There lives not a man more innocent of a disloyal thought, or of a traitorous purpose. What I say for myself, I will, to the best of my knowledge, say and maintain, on account of the noble Countess, to whom I am indebted for nurture."

"Perish then in thy obstinacy!" said Bridgenorth; and turning hastily from him, he left the room, and Julian heard him hasten down the narrow staircase, as if distrusting his own resolution.

With a heavy heart, yet with that confidence in an overruling Providence which never forsakes a good and brave man, Peveril betook himself to his lowly place of repose.

CHAPTER II.

The course of human life is changeful still,
As is the fickle wind and wandering rill;
Or, like the light dance which the wild breeze weaves
Amidst the faded race of fallen leaves;
Which now its breath bears down, now tosses high,
Beats to the earth, or wafts to middle sky.
Such, and so varied, the precarious play
Of fate with man, frail tenant of a day.

Anonymous.

Whilst, overcome with fatigue, and worn out by anxiety, Julian Peveril slumbered as a prisoner in the house of his hereditary enemy, Fortune was preparing his release by one of those sudden frolics with which she loves to confound the calculations and expectancies of humanity; and as she fixes on strange agents for such purposes, she condescended to employ, on the present occasion, no less a personage than Mistress Deborah Debbitch.

Instigated, doubtless, by the pristine reminiscences of former times, no sooner had that most prudent and considerate dame found herself in the vicinity of the scenes of her earlier days, than she bethought herself of a visit to the ancient housekeeper of Martindale Castle, Dame Ellesmere by name, who, long retired from active service, resided at the keeper's-lodge, in the west thicket, with her nephew, Lance Outram, subsisting upon the savings of her better days, and on a small pension allowed by Sir Geoffrey to her age and faithful services.

Now Dame Ellesmere and Mistress Deborah had not by any means been formerly on so friendly a footing, as this haste to visit her might be supposed to intimate. But years had taught Deborah to forget and forgive; or perhaps she had no special objection, under cover of a visit to Dame Ellesmere, to take the chance of seeing what changes time had made on her old admirer the keeper. Both inhabitants were in the cottage, when, after having seen her master set forth on his expedition to the Castle, Mistress Debbitch, dressed in her very best gown, footed it through gutter, and over

stile, and by pathway green, to knock at their door, and to lift the latch at the hospitable invitation which bade her come in.

Dame Ellesmere's eyes were so dim, that even with the aid of spectacles, she failed to recognize, in the portly and mature personage who entered their cottage, the tight well-made lass, who, presuming on her good looks and flippant tongue, had so often provoked her by insubordination; and her former lover, the redoubted Lance, not being conscious that ale had given rotundity to his own figure, which was formerly so slight and active, and that brandy had transferred to his nose the colour which had once occupied his cheeks, was unable to discover that Deborah's French cap, composed of sarsenet and Brussels lace, shaded the features which had so often procured him a rebuke from Dr Dummerar, for suffering his eyes, during the time of prayers, to wander to the maid-servants' bench.

In brief, the blushing visitor was compelled to make herself known; and when known, was received by aunt and nephew with the most sincere cordiality.

The home-brewed was produced; and in lieu of more vulgar food, a few slices of venison presently hissed in the frying-pan, giving strong room for inference that Lance Outram, in his capacity of keeper, neglected not his own cottage when he supplied the larder at the Castle. A modest sip of the excellent Derbyshire ale, and a tasting of the highly-seasoned hash, soon placed Deborah entirely at home with her old acquaintance.

Having put all necessary questions, and received all suitable answers, respecting the state of the neighbourhood, and such of her own friends as continued to reside there, the conversation began rather to flag, until Deborah found the art of again renewing its interest, by communicating to her friends the dismal intelligence that they must soon look for deadly bad news from the Castle; for that her present master, Major Bridgenorth, had been summoned, by some great people from London, to assist in taking her old master, Sir Geoffrey; and that all Master Bridgenorth's servants, and several other persons whom she named, friends and adherents of the same interest, had

assembled a force to surprise the Castle; and that as Sir Geoffrey, was now so old, and gouty withal, it could not be expected he should make the defence he was wont; and then he was known to be so stout-hearted, that it was not to be supposed that he would yield up without stroke of sword; and then if he was killed, as he was like to be, amongst them that liked never a bone of his body, and now had him at their mercy, why, in that case, she, Dame Deborah, would look upon Lady Peveril as little better than a dead woman; and undoubtedly there would be a general mourning through all that country, where they had such great kin; and silks were like to rise on it, as Master Lutestring, the mercer of Chesterfield, was like to feel in his purse bottom. But for her part, let matters wag how they would, an if Master Julian Peveril was to come to his own, she could give as near a guess as e'er another who was like to be Lady at Martindale.

The text of this lecture, or, in other words, the fact that Bridgenorth was gone with a party to attack Sir Geoffrey Peveril in his own Castle of Martindale, sounded so stunningly strange in the ears of those old retainers of his family, that they

had no power either to attend to Mistress Deborah's inferences, or to interrupt the velocity of speech with which she poured them forth. And when at length she made a breathless pause, all that poor Dame Ellesmere could reply, was the emphatic question, " Bridgenorth brave Peveril of the Peak !—Is the woman mad ?"

" Come, come, dame," said Deborah, " woman me no more than I woman you. I have not been called Mistress at the head of the table for so many years, to be woman'd here by you. And for the news, it is as true as that you are sitting there in a white hood, who will wear a black one ere long."

" Lance Outram," said the old woman, " make out, if thou be'st a man, and listen about if aught stirs up at the Castle."

" If there should," said Outram, " I am even too long here ;" and he caught up his cross-bow, and one or two arrows, and rushed out of the cottage.

" Well-a-day !" said Mistress Deborah, " see if my news have not frightened away Lance Outram too, whom they used to say nothing could

start. But do not take on so, dame; for I dare say if the Castle and the lands pass to my new master, Major Bridgenorth, as it is like they will —for I have heard that he has powerful debts over the estate—you shall have my good word with him, and I promise you he is no bad man; something precise about preaching and praying, and about the dress which one should wear, which, I must own, beseems not a gentleman, as, to be sure, every woman knows best what becomes her. But for you, dame, that wear a prayer-book at your girdle, with your housewife-case, and never change the fashion of your white hood, I dare say he will not grudge you the little matter you need, and are not able to win."

"Out, sordid jade!" exclaimed Dame Ellesmere, her very flesh quivering betwixt apprehension and anger, "and hold your peace this instant, or I will find those that shall flay the very hide from thee with dog-whips. Hast thou eat thy noble master's bread, not only to betray his trust, and fly from his service, but wouldst thou come here, like an ill-omened bird as thou art, to triumph over their downfall?"

"Nay, dame," said Deborah, over whom the violence of the old woman had obtained a certain predominance; "it is not I that say it—only the warrant of the Parliament folks."

"I thought we had done with their warrants ever since the blessed twenty-ninth of May," said the old housekeeper of Martindale Castle; "but this I tell thee, sweatheart, that I have seen such warrants crammed, at the sword's point, down the throat of them that brought them; and so shall this be, if there is one true man left to drink of the Dove."

As she spoke, Lance Outram re-entered the cottage. "Naunt," he said in dismay, "I doubt it is true what she says. The beacon tower is as black as my belt. No Pole-star of Peveril. What does that betoken?"

"Death, ruin, and captivity," exclaimed old Ellesmere. "Make for the Castle, thou knave. Thrust in thy great body. Strike for the house that bred thee and fed thee; and if thou art buried under the ruins, thou diest a man's death."

"Nay, naunt, I shall not be slack," answered

Outram. "But here come folks that I warrant can tell us more on't."

One or two of the female servants, who had fled from the Castle during the alarm, now rushed in with various reports of the case; but all agreeing that a body of armed men were in possession of the Castle, and that Major Bridgenorth had taken young Master Julian prisoner, and conveyed him down to Moultrassie-Hall, with his feet tied under the belly of the nag—a shameful sight to be seen—and he so well born and so handsome.

Lance scratched his head; and though feeling the duty incumbent upon him as a faithful servant, which was indeed specially dinned into him by the cries and exclamations of his aunt, he seemed not a little dubious how to conduct himself. "I would to God, naunt," he said at last, "that old Whitaker were alive now, with his long stories about Marston-moor and Edgehill, that made us all yawn our jaws off their hinges, in spite of broiled rashers and double-beer. When a man is missed, he is moaned, as

they say; and I would rather than a broad-piece he had been here to have sorted this matter, for it is clean out of my way as a woodsman, that have no skill of war. But dang it, if old Sir Geoffrey go to the wall without a knock for it! Here you, Nell—(speaking to one of the fugitive maidens from the Castle)—but, no—you have not the heart of a cat, and are afraid of your own shadow by moonlight—But, Cis, you are a stout-hearted wench, and know a buck from a bull-finch. Hark thee, Cis, as you would wish to be married, get up to Castle again, and get thee in—thou best knowest where—for thou hast oft gotten out of postern to a dance, or junketting, to my knowledge—Get thee back to the Castle, as ye hope to be married—See my lady—they cannot hinder thee of that—my lady has a head worth twenty of ours—If I am to gather force, light up the beacon for a signal; and spare not a tar barrel on't. Thou may'st do it safe enough. I warrant the Round-heads busy with drink and plunder.—And hark thee, say to my lady, I am gone down to the miners' houses at Bonadventure. The rogues were mutinying for their

wages but yesterday; they will be all ready for good or bad. Let her send orders down to me; or do you come yourself, your legs are long enough."

"Whether they are or not, Master Lance, (and you know nothing of the matter,) they shall do your errand to-night, for love of the old Knight and his lady."

So Cisly Sellok, a kind of Derbyshire Camilla, who had won the smock at the foot-race at Ashbourne, sprung forward towards the Castle, with a speed which few could have equalled.

"There goes a mettled wench," said Lance; "and now, naunt, give me the old broad-sword —it is above the bed-head—and my wood-knife; and I shall do well enough."

"And what is to become of me?" bleated the unfortunate Mistress Deborah Debbitch.

"You must remain here with my aunt, Mistress Deb; and for old acquaintance sake, she will take care no harm befalls you; but take heed how you attempt to break bounds."

So saying, and pondering in his own mind the task which he had undertaken, the hardy forester

strode down the moonlight glade, scarcely hearing the blessings and cautions which Dame Ellesmere kept showering after him. His thoughts were not altogether warlike. "What a tight ancle the jade hath!—she trips it like a doe in summer over the dew. Well, but here are the huts—Let us to this gear.—Are ye all asleep, ye dammers, sinkers, and drift-drivers? turn out, ye subterranean badgers. Here is your master, Sir Geoffrey, dead, for aught you know or care. Do not you see the beacon is unlit, and you sit there like so many asses?"

"Why," answered one of the miners, who now began to come out of their huts,

"An' he be dead,
He will eat no more bread."

"And you are like to eat none neither," said Lance; "for the works will be presently stopped, and all of you turned off."

"Well, and what of it, Master Lance? As good play for nought as work for nought. Here is four weeks we have scarce seen the colour of Sir Geoffrey's coin; and you ask us to care whether he be dead or in life! For you, that goes

about, trotting upon your horse, and doing for work what all men do for pleasure, it may be well enough; but it is another matter to be leaving God's light, and burrowing all day and night in darkness, like a toad in a hole—that's not to be done for nought, I trow; and if Sir Geoffrey is dead, his soul will suffer for't; and if he's alive, we'll have him in the Barmoot Court."

"Hark ye, Gaffer," said Lance, "and take notice, my mates, all of you," for a considerable number of these rude and subterranean people had now assembled to hear the discussion—"Has Sir Geoffrey, think you, ever put a penny in his pouch out of this same Bonadventure mine?"

"I cannot say as I think he has," answered old Ditchley, the party who maintained the controversy.

"Answer on your conscience, though it be but a leaden one, Do not you know that he hath lost a good penny?"

"Why, I believe he may," said Gaffer Ditchley. "What then?—lose to-day, win to-morrow—the miner must eat in the mean time."

" True; but what will you eat when Master Bridgenorth gets the land, that will not hear of a mine being wrought on his own ground? Will he work on at dead loss, think ye?" demanded trusty Lance.

" Bridgenorth?—he of Moultrassie-Hall, that stopped the great Felicity Work, on which his father laid out some say ten thousand pounds, and never got in a penny? Why, what has he to do with Sir Geoffrey's property down here at Bonadventure? It was never his, I trow."

" Nay, what do I know," answered Lance, who saw the impression he had made. " Law and debt will give him half Derbyshire, I think, unless you stand by old Sir Geoffrey."

" But if Sir Geoffrey be dead," said Ditchley, cautiously, " what good will our standing by do to him?"

" I did not say he was dead, but only as bad as dead; in the hands of the Round-heads—a prisoner up yonder, at his own Castle," said Lance; " and will have his head cut off, like the good Earl of Derby's, at Bolton-le-Moors."

"Nay, then, comrades," said Gaffer Ditchley, "an it be as Master Lance says, I think we should bear a hand for stout old Sir Geoffrey, against a low-born mean-spirited fellow like Bridgenorth, who shut up a shaft had cost thousands, without getting a penny profit on't. So hurra for Sir Geoffrey, and down with the Rump! But hold ye a blink—hold—(and the waving of his hand stopped the commencing cheer)—Hark ye, Master Lance, it must be all over, for the beacon is as black as night; and you know yourself that marks the Lord's death."

"It will kindle again in an instant," said Lance; internally adding, "I pray to God it may!—It will kindle in an instant—lack of fuel, and the confusion of the family."

"Ay, like enow, like enow," said Ditchley; "but I winna budge till I see it blazing."

"Why then, there a goes!" said Lance. "Thank thee, Cis—thank thee, my good wench. Believe your own eyes, my lads, if you will not believe me; and now hurra for Peveril of the Peak—the King and his friends—and down with Rumps and Roundheads!"

The sudden rekindling of the beacon had all the effect which Lance could have desired upon the minds of his rude and ignorant hearers, who, in their superstitious humour, had strongly associated the Polar-star of Peveril with the fortunes of the family. Once moved, according to the national character of their countrymen, they soon became enthusiastic; and Lance found himself at the head of thirty stout fellows and upwards, armed with their pick-axes, and ready to execute whatever task he should impose on them.

Trusting to enter the Castle by the postern, which had served to accommodate himself and other domestics upon an emergency, his only anxiety was to keep his march silent; and he earnestly recommended to his followers to reserve their shouts for the moment of the attack. They had not advanced far on their road to the Castle, when Cisly Sellok met them, so breathless with haste, that the poor girl was obliged to throw herself into Master Lance's arms.

"Stand up, my mettled wench," said he, giving her a sly kiss at the same time, "and let us know what is going on up at the Castle."

"My lady bids you, as you would serve God and your master, not to come up to the Castle, which can but make bloodshed; for she says Sir Geoffrey is lawfully in hand, and that he must bide the issue; and that he is innocent of what he is charged with, and is going up to speak for himself before King and Council, and she goes up with him. And besides, they have found out the postern, the Round-head rogues; for two of them saw me when I went out of door, and chased me; but I shewed them a fair pair of heels."

"As ever dashed dew from the cowslip," said Lance. "But what the foul fiend is to be done? for if they have secured the postern, I know not how the dickens we can get in."

"All is fastened with bolt and staple, and guarded with gun and pistol, at the Castle," quoth Cisly; "and so sharp are they, that they nigh caught me coming with my lady's message, as I told you. But my lady says, if you could deliver her son, Master Julian, from Bridgenorth, that she would hold it good service."

"What," said Lance, "is young master at

the Castle? I taught him to shoot his first shaft. But how to get in!"

"He was at the Castle in the midst of the ruffle, but old Bridgenorth has carried him down prisoner to the Hall," answered Cisly. "There was never faith nor courtesy in an old Puritan, who never had pipe and tabor in his house since it was built."

"Or who stopped a promising mine," said Ditchley, "to save a few thousand pounds, when he might have made himself as rich as the Lord of Chatsworth, and fed a hundred good fellows all the whilst."

"Why, then," said Lance, "since you are all of a mind, we will go draw the cover for the old badger; and I promise you that the Hall is not like one of your real houses of quality, where the walls are as thick as whinstone-dikes, but foolish brick-work, that your pick-axes will work through as if it were cheese. Huzza once more for Peveril of the Peak! down with Bridgenorth, and all upstart cuckoldy Round-heads!"

Having indulged the throats of his followers

with one buxom huzza, Lance commanded them to cease their clamours, and proceeded to conduct them, by such paths as seemed the least likely to be watched, to the court-yard of Moultrassie-Hall. On the road they were joined by several stout yeomen farmers, either followers of the Peveril family, or friends to the High Church and Cavalier party; most of whom, alarmed by the news which began to fly fast through the neighbourhood, were armed with sword and pistol.

Lance Outram halted his party, at the distance, as he himself described it, of a flight-shot from the house, and advanced alone, and in silence, to reconnoitre; and having previously commanded Ditchley and his subterranean allies to come to his assistance whenever he should whistle, he crept cautiously forward, and soon found that those whom he came to surprise, true to the discipline which had gained their party such decided superiority during the Civil War, had posted a sentinel, who paced through the court-yard, piously chaunting a psalm-tune, while his arms, crossed on his bosom, supported a gun of formidable length.

"Now a true soldier," said Lance Outram to himself, "would put stop to thy snivelling ditty, by making a broad arrow quiver in your heart, and no great alarm given. But dang it, I have not the right spirit for a soldier—I cannot fight a man till my blood's up; and for shooting him from behind a wall, it is cruelly like to stalking a deer. I'll e'en face him, and try what to make of him."

With this doughty resolution, and taking no further care to conceal himself, he entered the court-yard boldly, and was making forward to the front door of the Hall, as a matter of course. But the old Cromwellian, who was on guard, had not so learned his duty. "Who goes there?—Stand, friend—stand; or, verily, I will shoot thee to death!" were challenges which followed each other quick, the last being enforced by the levelling and presenting the said long-barrelled gun with which he was armed.

"Why, what a murrain!" answered Lance. "Is it your fashion to go a shooting at this time o' night? Why, this is but a time for bat-fowling."

"Nay, but hark thee, friend," said the experienced sentinel; "I am none of those who do this work negligently. Thou canst not snare me with thy crafty speech, though thou wouldst make it to sound simple in mine ear. Of a verity, I will shoot, unless thou tell thy name and business."

"Name!" said Lance; "why what a dickens should it be but Robin Round—honest Robin of Redham? and for business, an you must needs know, I come on a message from some Parliament man, up yonder at the Castle, with letters for worshipful Master Bridgenorth of Moultrassie-Hall; and this be the place, as I think; though why ye be marching up and down at his door, like the sign of the Red Man, with your old firelock there, I cannot so well guess."

"Give me the letters, my friend," said the sentinel, to whom this explanation seemed very natural and probable, "and I will cause them forthwith to be delivered into his worship's own hand."

Rummaging in his pockets, as if to pull out the letters which never existed, Master Lance approached within the sentinel's piece, and before he

was aware, suddenly seized him by the collar, whistled sharp and shrill, and exerting his skill as a wrestler, for which he had been distinguished in his youth, he stretched his antagonist on his back—the musket for which they struggled going off in the fall.

The miners rushed into the court-yard at Lance's signal; and hopeless any longer of prosecuting his design in silence, Lance commanded two of them to secure the prisoner, and the rest to cheer loudly, and attack the door of the house. Instantly the court-yard of the mansion rung with the cry of "Peveril of the Peak for ever!" with all the abuse which the Royalists had invented to cast upon the Round-heads during so many years of contention; and at the same time, while some assailed the door with their mining implements, others directed their attack against the angle, where a kind of porch joined to the main front of the building; and there, in some degree protected by the projection of the wall, and of a balcony which overhung the porch, wrought in more security, as well as with more effect, than the

others; for the doors being of oak, thickly studded with nails, offered a more effectual resistance to violence than the brick-work.

The noise of this hubbub on the outside soon excited wild alarm and tumult within. Lights flew from window to window, and voices were heard demanding the cause of the tumult; to which the party cries of those who were in the court-yard afforded a sufficient, or at least the only answer, which was vouchsafed. At length the window of a projecting staircase opened, and the voice of Bridgenorth himself demanded authoritatively what thé tumult meant, and commanded the rioters to desist, upon their own proper and immediate peril.

"We want our young master, you canting old thief," was the reply; "and if we have him not instantly, the topmost stone of your house shall lie as low as the foundation."

"We will try that presently," said Bridgenorth; "for if there is another blow strucken against the walls of my peaceful house, I will fire my carabine among you, and your blood be upon

your own head. I have a score of friends, well-armed with musket and pistol, to defend my house; and we have both the means and heart, with heaven's assistance, to repay any violence you can offer."

"Master Bridgenorth," replied Lance, who, though no soldier, was sportsman enough to comprehend the advantage which those under cover, and using fire-arms, must necessarily have over his party, exposed to their aim, in a great measure, and without means of answering their fire, —"Master Bridgenorth, let us crave parley with you, and fair conditions. We desire to do you no evil, but will have back our young master; it is enough that you have got our old one and his lady. It is foul chasing to kill hart, hind, and fawn; and we will give you some light on the subject in an instant."

This speech was followed by a great crash amongst the lower windows of the house, according to a new species of attack which had been suggested by some of the assailants.

"I would take the honest fellow's word, and

let young Peveril go," said one of the garrison, who, carelessly yawning, approached on the inside the post at which Bridgenorth had stationed himself.

"Are you mad?" said Bridgenorth; "or do you think me poor enough in spirit to give up the advantages I now possess over the family of Peveril, for the awe of a parcel of boors, whom the first discharge will scatter like chaff before the whirlwind?"

"Nay," answered the speaker, who was the same individual who had struck Julian by his resemblance to the man who called himself Ganlesse, "I love a dire revenge, but we shall buy it somewhat too dear if these rascals set the house on fire, as they are like to do, while you are parleying from the window. They have thrown torches or fire-brands into the hall; and it is all our friends can do to keep the flame from catching the wainscoting, which is old and dry."

"Now may heaven judge thee for thy lightness of spirit," answered Bridgenorth; "one would think mischief was so properly thy element, that

to thee it was indifferent whether friend or foe was the sufferer."

So saying, he ran hastily down stairs, into which, through broken casements, and betwixt the iron bars, which prevented human entrance, the assailants had thrust lighted straw, sufficient to excite much smoke and some fire, and to throw the defenders of the house into great confusion; insomuch, that of several shots fired hastily from the windows, little or no damage followed to the besiegers, who, getting warm in the onset, answered the hostile discharges with loud shouts of "Peveril for ever!" and had already made a practicable breach through the brick-wall of the tenement, through which Lance, Ditchley, and several of the most adventurous among their followers, made their way into the hall.

The complete capture of the house remained, however, as far off as ever. The defenders mixed with much coolness and skill, that solemn and deep spirit of enthusiasm which sets life at less than nothing, in comparison to real or supposed duty. From the half-opened doors which led

into the hall, they maintained a fire which began to grow fatal. One miner was shot dead; three or four were wounded; and Lance scarce knew whether he should draw his forces from the house, and leave it a prey to the flames, or, making a desperate attack on the posts occupied by the defenders, try to obtain unmolested possession of the place. At this moment his course of conduct was determined by an unexpected occurrence, of which it is necessary to trace the cause.

Julian Peveril had been, like other inhabitants of Moultrassie-Hall on that momentous night, awakened by the report of the sentinel's musket, followed by the shouts of his father's vassals and followers; of which he collected enough to guess that Bridgenorth's house was attacked with a view to his liberation. Very doubtful of the issue of such an attempt, dizzy with the slumber from which he had been so suddenly awakened, and confounded with the rapid succession of events to which he had been lately a witness, he hastily put on a part of his clothes, and hastened to the window of his apartment. From this he could see

nothing to relieve his anxiety, for it looked towards a quarter different from that on which the attack was made. He attempted his door; it was locked on the outside; and his perplexity and anxiety became extreme, when suddenly the lock was turned, and in an undress, hastily assumed in the moment of alarm, her hair streaming on her shoulders, her eyes gleaming betwixt fear and resolution, Alice Bridgenorth rushed into his apartment, and seized his hand with the fervent exclamation, "Julian, save my father!"

The light which she bore in her hand served to shew those features which could rarely have been viewed by any one without emotion, but which bore an expression irresistible to a lover.

"Alice," he said, "what means this? What is the danger? Where is your father?"

"Do not stay to question," she answered; "but if you would save him, follow me."

At the same time she led the way, with great speed, half way down the turret staircase which led to his room, thence turning through a side door, along a long gallery, to a larger and wider

stair, at the bottom of which stood her father, surrounded by four or five of his friends, scarce discernible through the smoke of the fire which began to take in the hall, as well as that which arose from the repeated discharge of their own fire-arms.

Julian saw there was not a moment to be lost, if he meant to be a successful mediator. He rushed through Bridgenorth's party ere they were aware of his approach, and throwing himself amongst the assailants who occupied the hall in considerable numbers, he assured them of his personal safety, and conjured them to retreat.

"Not without a few more slices at the Rump, master," answered Lance. "I am principally glad to see you safe and well; but here is Joe Rimegap shot as dead as a buck in season, and more of us are hurt; and we'll have revenge, and roast the Puritans like apples for lambs-wool!"

"Then you shall roast me along with them," said Julian; "for I vow to God, I will not leave the hall, being bound by parole of honour to abide with Master Bridgenorth till lawfully dismissed."

"Now out on you, an you were ten times a Peveril!" said Ditchley; "to give so many honest fellows loss and labour on your behalf, and to shew them no kinder countenance.—I say, beet up the fire, and burn all together!"

"Nay, nay; but peace, my masters, and hearken to reason," said Julian; "we are all here in evil condition, and you will only make it worse by contention. Do you help to put out this same fire, which will else cost us all dear. Keep yourselves under arms. Let Master Bridgenorth and I settle some grounds of accommodation, and I trust all will be favourably made up on both sides; and if not, you shall have my consent and countenance to fight it out; and come on it what will, I will never forget this night's good service."

He then drew Ditchley and Lance Outram aside, while the rest stood suspended at his appearance and words, and expressing the utmost thanks and gratitude for what they had already done, urged them, as the greatest favour which they could do towards him and his father's house, to permit him to negociate the terms of his emanci-

pation from thraldom; at the same time, forcing on Ditchley five or six gold pieces, that the brave lads of Bonadventure might drink his health; whilst to Lance he expressed the warmest sense of his active kindness, but protested he could only consider it as good service to his house, if he was allowed to manage the matter after his own fashion.

"Why," answered Lance, "I am well out on it, Master Julian; for it is matter beyond my mastery. All that I stand to is, that I will see you safe out of this same Moultrassie-Hall; for our old Naunt Whitaker will else give me but cold comfort when I come home. Truth is, I began unwillingly; but when I saw the poor fellow Joe shot beside me, why I thought we should have some amends. But I put it all in your Honour's hands."

During this colloquy both parties had been amicably employed in extinguishing the fire, which might otherwise have been fatal to all. It required a general effort to get it under; and both parties agreed on the necessary labour, with

as much unanimity, as if the water they brought in leathern buckets from the well to throw upon the fire, had had some effect in slaking their mutual hostility.

CHAPTER III.

Necessity—thou best of peace-makers,
As well as surest prompter of invention—
Help us to composition.

Anonymous.

While the fire continued, the two parties laboured in active union, like the jarring factions of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem, when compelled to unite in resisting an assault of the besiegers. But when the last bucket of water had hissed on the few embers that continued to glimmer—when the sense of mutual hostility, hitherto suspended by a feeling of common danger, was in its turn rekindled—the parties, mingled as they had hitherto been in one common exertion, drew off from each other, and began to arrange themselves at opposite sides of the hall, and handle their weapons, as if for a renewal of the fight.

Bridgenorth interrupted any farther progress of this menaced hostility. "Julian Peveril," he said, "thou art free to walk thine own path, since thou wilt not walk with me that road which is more safe, as well as more honourable. But if you do by my counsel, you will get soon beyond the British seas."

"Ralph Bridgenorth," said one of his friends, "this is but evil and feeble conduct on thine own part. Wilt thou withhold thy hand from the battle, to defend, from these sons of Belial, the captive of thy bow and of thy spear? Surely we are enow to deal with them in the security of our good old cause; nor should we part with this spawn of the old serpent, until we essay whether the Lord will not give us victory therein."

A hum of stern assent followed; and had not Ganlesse now interfered, the combat would probably have been renewed. He took the advocate for war apart into one of the window recesses, and apparently satisfied his objections; for as he returned to his companions, he said to them, "Our friend hath so well argued this matter, that, verily, since he is of the same mind with the wor-

thy Major Bridgenorth, I think the youth may be set at liberty."

As no further objection was offered, it only remained with Julian to thank and reward those who had been active in his assistance. Having first obtained from Bridgenorth a promise of indemnity to them for the riot they had committed, a few kind words conveyed his sense of their services ; and some broad pieces, thrust into the hand of Lance Outram, furnished the means for affording them a holiday. They would have remained to protect him, but fearful of farther disorder, and relying entirely on the good faith of Major Bridgenorth, he dismissed them all excepting Lance, whom he detained to attend upon him for a few minutes, till he should depart from Moultrassie. But ere leaving the Hall, he could not repress his desire to speak with Bridgenorth in secret; and advancing towards him, he expressed such a desire.

Tacitly granting what was asked of him, Bridgenorth led the way to a small summer saloon adjoining to the Hall, where, with his usual gravity and indifference of manner, he seemed to

await in silence what Peveril had to communicate.

Julian found it difficult, where so little opening was afforded him, to find a tone in which to open the subjects he had at heart, that should be at once dignified and conciliating. "Major Bridgenorth," he said at length, "you have been a son, and an affectionate one—You may conceive my present anxiety—My father!—What has been designed for him?"

"What the law will," answered Bridgenorth. "Had he walked by the counsels which I procured to be given to him, he might have dwelt safely in the house of his ancestors. His fate is now beyond my control—far beyond yours. It must be with him as his country shall decide."

"And my mother?" said Peveril.

"Will consult, as she has ever done, her own duty; and create her own happiness by doing so," replied Bridgenorth. "Believe, my designs towards your family are better than they may seem through the mist which adversity has spread around your house. I may triumph as a man;

but as a man I must also remember, in my hour, that mine enemies have had theirs.—Have you aught else to say ?" he added, after a momentary pause. "You have rejected once, yea and again, the hand I stretched out to you. Methinks little more remains between us."

These words, which seemed to cut short farther discussion, were calmly spoken ; so that though they appeared to discourage farther question, they could not interrupt that which still trembled on Julian's tongue. He made a step or two towards the door ; then suddenly returned. "Your daughter ?" he said—"Major Bridgenorth—I should ask—I *do* ask forgiveness for mentioning her name—but may I not inquire after her ?—May I not express my wishes for her future happiness."

"Your interest in her is but too flattering," said Bridgenorth ; "but you have already chosen your part ; and you must be, in future, strangers to each other. I may have wished it otherwise, but the hour of grace is passed, during which your compliance with my advice might—I will

speak it plainly—have led to your union. For her happiness—if such a word belongs to a mortal pilgrimage—I shall care for it sufficiently. She leaves this place to-day, under the guardianship of a sure friend."

"Not of ——" exclaimed Peveril, and stopped short; for he felt he had no right to pronounce the name which came to his lips.

"Why do you pause," said Bridgenorth; "a sudden thought is often a wise, almost always an honest one. With whom did you suppose I meant to entrust my child, that the idea called forth so anxious an expression?"

"Again I should ask your forgiveness," said Julian, "for meddling where I have little right to interfere. But I saw a face here that is known to me—The person calls himself Ganlesse—Is it with him that you mean to entrust your daughter?"

"Even to the person who calls himself Ganlesse," said Bridgenorth, without expressing either anger or surprise.

"And do you know to whom you commit a

charge so precious to all who know her, and so dear to yourself?" said Julian.

"Do *you* know, who ask me the question?" answered Bridgenorth.

"I own I do not," answered Julian; "but I have seen him in a character so different from what he now wears, that I feel it my duty to warn you, how you entrust the charge of your child to one who can alternately play the profligate or the hypocrite, as suits his own interest or humour."

Bridgenorth smiled contemptuously. "I might be angry," he said, "with the officious zeal which supposes that its green conceptions can instruct my grey hairs; but, good Julian, I do but only ask from you the liberal construction, that I, who have had much converse with mankind, know with whom I trust what is dearest to me. He of whom thou speakest, hath one visage to his friends, though he may have others to the world, living amongst those before whom honest features should be concealed under a grotesque vizard; even as in the sinful sports of

the day, called maskings and mummeries, where the wise, if he shew himself at all, must be contented to play the apish and fantastic fool."

"I would only pray your wisdom to beware," said Julian, "of one, who, as he has a vizard for others, may also have one which can disguise his real features from you yourself."

"This is being over careful, young man," replied Bridgenorth, more shortly than he had hitherto spoken; "if you would walk by my counsel, you will attend to your own affairs, which, credit me, deserve all your care, and leave others to the management of theirs."

This was too plain to be misunderstood; and Peveril was compelled to take his leave of Bridgenorth, and of Moultrassie-Hall, without further parley or explanation. The reader may imagine how oft he looked back, and tried to guess, amongst the lights which continued to twinkle in various parts of the building, which sparkle it was that gleamed from the bower of Alice. When the road turned into another direction, he sunk into a deep reverie, from which he was at length roused by the voice of Lance, who demanded where he

intended to quarter for the night. He was unprepared to answer the question, but the honest keeper himself prompted a solution of the problem, by requesting that he would occupy a spare bed in the Lodge; to which Julian willingly agreed. The rest of the inhabitants were retired to rest when they entered; but Dame Ellesmere, apprised by a messenger of her nephew's hospitable intent, had every thing in the best readiness she could, for the son of her ancient patron. Peveril betook himself to rest; and notwithstanding so many subjects of anxiety, slept soundly till the morning was far advanced.

His slumbers were first broken by Lance, who had been long up, and already active in his service. He informed him, that his horse, arms, and small cloak-bag, had been sent from the Castle by one of Major Bridgenorth's servants, who brought a letter, discharging from the Major's service the unfortunate Deborah Debbitch, and prohibiting her return to the Hall. The officer of the House of Commons, escorted by a strong guard, had left Martindale Castle that morning early, travelling in Sir Geoffrey's car-

riage—his lady being also permitted to attend on him. To this he had to add, that the property at the Castle was taken possession of by Master Win-the-fight, the attorney, from Chesterfield, with other officers of law, in name of Major Bridgenorth, a large creditor of the unfortunate knight.

Having told these Job's tidings, Lance paused; and after a moment's hesitation, declared he was resolved to quit the country, and go up to London along with his young master. Julian argued the point with him; and insisted he had better stay to take charge of his aunt, in case she should be disturbed by these strangers. Lance replied, "She would have one with her, who would protect her well enough; for there was wherewithal to buy protection amongst them. But for himself, he was resolved to follow Master Julian to the death."

Julian heartily thanked him for his love.

"Nay, it is not altogether out of love neither," said Lance, "though I am as loving as another; but it is, as it were, partly out of fear lest I be called over the coals for last night's matter; for

as for the miners, they will never trouble them, as the creatures only act after their kind."

"I will write in your behalf to Major Bridgenorth, who is bound to afford you protection, if you have such fear," said Julian.

"Nay, for that matter, it is not altogether fear, more than altogether love," answered the enigmatical keeper; "although it hath a tasting of both in it. And, to speak plain truth, thus it is—Dame Debbitch and Naunt Ellesmere have resolved to set up their horses together, and have made up all their quarrels. And of all ghosts in the world, the worst is, when an old true-love comes back to haunt a poor fellow like me. Mistress Deborah, though distressed enow for the loss of her place, has been already speaking of a broken sixpence, or some such token, as if a man could remember such things for so many years, even if she had not gone over seas, like a woodcock, in the meanwhile."

Julian could scarce forbear laughing. "I thought you too much of a man, Lance, to fear a woman marrying you whether you would or no."

"It has been many an honest man's luck, for

all that," said Lance; "and a woman in the very house has so many deuced opportunities. And then there would be two upon one; for Naunt, though high enough when any of *your* folks are concerned, hath some look to the main chance; and it seems Mistress Deb is as rich as a Jew."

"And you, Lance," said Julian, "have no mind to marry for cake and pudding."

"No, truly, Master," answered Lance, "unless I knew what dough they were baked on. How the devil do I know how the jade came by so much? And then if she speaks of tokens and love-passages, let her be the same tight lass I broke the sixpence with, and I will be the same true lad to her. But I never heard of true love lasting ten years; and hers, if it lives at all, must be nearer twenty.'

"Well, then, Lance," said Julian, "since you are resolved on the thing, we will go to London together; where, if I cannot retain you in my service, and if my father recovers not these misfortunes, I will endeavour to promote you elsewhere."

"Nay, nay," said Lance, "I trust to be back to bonny Martindale before it is long, and to keep the greenwood, as I have been wont to do; for as to Dame Debbitch, when they have not me for their common butt, Naunt and she will soon bend bows on each other. So here comes old Dame Ellesmere with your breakfast. I will but give some directions about the deer to Rough Ralph, my helper, and saddle my forest poney, and your honour's horse, which is no prime one, and we will be ready to trot."

Julian was not sorry for this addition to his establishment; for Lance had shewn himself, on the preceding evening, a shrewd and bold fellow, and attached to his master. He therefore set himself to reconcile his aunt to parting with her nephew for some time. Her unlimited devotion for "the family," readily induced the old lady to acquiesce in his proposal, though not without a gentle sigh over the ruins of a castle in the air, which was founded on the well-saved purse of Mistress Deborah Debbitch. "At any rate," she thought, "it was as well that Lance should be out of the way of that bold, long-

legged, beggarly trollop, Cis Cellok." But to poor Deb herself, the expatriation of Lance, whom she had looked to as a sailor to a port under his lee, for which he can run, if weather becomes foul, was a second severe blow, following close on her dismissal from the profitable service of Major Bridgenorth.

Julian visited the disconsolate damsel, in hopes of gaining some light upon Bridgenorth's projects regarding his daughter—the character of this Ganlesse—and other matters, with which her residence in the family might have made her acquainted; but he found her by far too much troubled in mind to afford him the least information. The name of Ganlesse she did not seem to recollect—that of Alice rendered her hysterical—that of Bridgenorth furious. She numbered up the various services she had rendered in the family—and denounced the plague of swartness to the linen—of leanness to the poultry—of dearth and dishonour to the house-keeping—and of lingering sickness and early death to Alice;—all which evils, she averred, had only been kept off by her continued, watchful, and incessant cares.—Then

again turning to the subject of the fugitive Lance, she expressed such a total contempt of that mean-spirited fellow, in a tone between laughing and crying, as satisfied Julian it was not a topic likely to act as a sedative; and that therefore, unless he made a longer stay than the urgent state of his affairs permitted, he was not likely to find Mistress Deborah in such a state of composure as might enable him to obtain from her any rational or useful information.

Lance, who good-naturedly took upon himself the whole burthen of Dame Debbitch's mental alienation, or "taking on," as such fits of *passio hysterica* are usually termed in the country, had too much feeling to produce himself before the victim of her own sensibility, and of his obduracy. He therefore intimated to Julian, by his assistant Ralph, that the horses stood saddled behind the Lodge, and that all was ready for their departure.

Julian took the hint, and they were soon mounted, and clearing the road, at a rapid trot, in the direction of London; but not by the most usual road. Julian calculated that the carriage in which

his father was transported would travel slowly; and it was his purpose, if possible, to get to London before it should arrive there, in order to have time to consult with the friends of his family, what measures should be taken in his father's behalf.

In this manner, they advanced a day's journey towards London; at the conclusion of which, Julian found his resting-place in a small inn upon the road. No one came, at the first call, to attend upon the guests and their horses, although the house was well lighted up; and there was a prodigious chattering in the kitchen, such as can only be produced by a French cook, when his mystery is in the very moment of projection. It instantly occurred to Julian—so rare was the ministry of these Gallic artists at that time—that the clamour he heard must necessarily be produced by the Sieur Chaubert, on whose *plats* he had lately feasted, along with Smith and Ganlesse.

One, or both of these, were therefore probably in the little inn; and if so, he might have some opportunity to discover their real purpose and character. How to avail himself of such a meet-

ing, he knew not; but chance favoured him more than he could have expected.

"I can scarce receive you, gentlefolks," said the landlord, who at length appeared at the door; "here be a sort of quality in my house to-night, whom less than all will not satisfy; nor all neither, for that matter."

"We are but plain fellows, landlord," said Julian; "we are bound for Moseley-market, and can get no farther to-night. Any hole will serve us, no matter what."

"Why," said the honest host, "if that be the case, I must e'en put one of you behind the bar, though the gentlemen have desired to be private; the other must take heart of grace, and help me at the tap."

"The tap for me," said Lance, without waiting his master's decision. "It is an element which I could live and die in."

"The bar, then, for me," said Peveril; and stepping back, whispered to Lance to exchange cloaks with him, desirous, if possible, to avoid being recognized.

The exchange was made in an instant; and pre-

sently afterwards the landlord brought a light; and as he guided Julian into his hostelry, cautioned him to sit quiet in the place where he should stow him; and if he was discovered, to say that he was one of the house, and leave him to make it good. "You will hear what the gallants say," he added; "but I think thou wilt carry away but little on it; for when it is not French, it is court gibberish; and that is as hard to construe."

The bar, into which our hero was inducted on these conditions, seemed formed, with respect to the public room, upon the principle of a citadel, intended to observe and bridle a rebellious capital. Here sat the host on the Saturday evenings, screened from the observation of his guests, yet with the power of observing both their wants and their behaviour, and also that of overhearing their conversation—a practice which he was much addicted to, being one of that numerous class of philanthropists, to whom their neighbour's business is of as much consequence, or rather more, than their own.

Here he planted his new guest, with a repeated caution not to disturb the gentlemen by speech

or motion ; and a promise that he should be speedily accommodated with a cold buttock of beef, and a tankard of home-brewed. And here he left him, with no other light than that which glimmered from the well-illuminated apartment within, through a sort of shuttle which accommodated the landlord with a view into it.

This situation, inconvenient enough in itself, was, on the present occasion, precisely what Julian would have selected. He wrapped himself in the weather-beaten cloak of Lance Outram, which had been stained, by age and weather, into a thousand variations of its original Lincoln green ; and with as little noise as he could, set himself to observe the two inmates, who had engrossed to themselves the whole of the apartment, which was usually open to the public. They sat by a table, well covered with such costly rarities, as could only have been procured by much forecast, and prepared by the exquisite Mons. Chaubert ; to which both seemed to do much justice.

Julian had little difficulty in ascertaining that one of the travellers was, as he had anticipated, the master of the said Chaubert, or, as he was

called by Ganlesse, Smith ; the other, who faced him, he had never seen before. This last was dressed like a gallant of the first order. His periwig, indeed, as he travelled on horseback, did not much exceed in size the bar-wig of a modern lawyer ; but then the essence which he shook from it with every motion, impregnated a whole apartment, which was usually only perfumed by that vulgar herb, tobacco. His riding-coat was laced in the newest and most courtly style ; and Grammont himself might have envied the embroidery of his waistcoat, and the peculiar cut of his breeches, which buttoned above the knee, permitting the shape of a very handsome leg to be completely seen. This, by the proprietor thereof, had been stretched out upon a stool, and he contemplated its proportions, from time to time, with infinite satisfaction.

The conversation between these worthies was so interesting, that we propose to assign to it another chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

——This is some creature of the elements,
Most like your sea-gull. He can wheel and whistle
His screaming song, e'en when the storm is loudest—
Take for his sheeted couch the restless foam
Of the wild wave-crest—slumber in the calm,
And dally with the storm. Yet 'tis a gull,
An arrant gull, with all this.

The Chieftain.

"And here is to thee," said the fashionable gallant whom we have described, "honest Tom; and a cup of welcome to thee out of Looby-land. Why, thou hast been so long in the country, that thou hast got a bumpkinly clod-compelling sort of look thyself. That greasy doublet fits thee as if it were thine reserved Sunday's apparel; and the points seem as if they were stay-laces bought for thy true love Marjory. I marvel thou canst still relish a ragout. Methinks now, to a stomach

bound in such a jacket, eggs and bacon were a diet more conforming."

" Rally away, my good lord, while wit lasts," answered his companion ; " yours is not the sort of ammunition which will bear much expenditure. Or rather, tell me news from court, since we have met so opportunely."

" You would have asked me these an hour ago," said the lord, " had not your very soul been under Chaubert's covered dishes. You remembered King's affairs will keep cool, and *entremets* must be eaten hot."

" Not so, my lord ; I only kept common talk whilst that eaves-dropping rascal of a landlord was in the room ; so that, now the coast is clear once more, I pray you for news from court."

" The Plot is non-suited," answered the courtier—" Sir George Wakeman acquitted—the witnesses discredited by the jury—Scroggs, who ranted on one side, is now ranting on t'other."

" Rat the Plot, Wakeman, witnesses, Papists and Protestants, all together ! Do you think I care for such trash as that ?—Till the Plot comes up the palace back-stair, and gets possession of

old Rowley's own imagination, I care not a farthing who believes or disbelieves. I hang by him will bear me out."

"Well, then," said my lord, "the next news is Rochester's disgrace."

"Disgraced!—How, and for what? The morning I came off, he stood as fair as any one."

"That's over—the epitaph has broken his neck—and now he may write one for his own court favour, for it is dead and buried."

"The epitaph!" exclaimed Tom; "why I was by when it was made; and it passed for an excellent good jest with him whom it was made upon."

"Ay, so it did amongst ourselves," answered his companion; "but it got abroad, and had a run like a mill-race. It was in every coffee-house, and in half the diurnals. Grammont translated it into French too; and there is no laughing at so sharp a jest, when it is dinned into your ears on all sides. So, disgraced is the author; and but for his Grace of Buckingham, the court would be as dull as my Lord Chancellor's wig."

"Or as the head it covers.—Well, my lord,

the fewer at court, there is the more room for those that can bustle there. But there are two main-strings of Shaftesbury's fiddle broken—the Popish Plot fallen into discredit—and Rochester disgraced. Changeful times—But here is to the little man who shall mend them."

" I apprehend you," replied his Lordship; " and meet your health with my love. Trust me, my lord loves you, and longs for you.—Nay, I have done you reason.—By your leave, the cup is with me. Here is to his buxom Grace of Bucks."

" As blithe a peer," said Smith, " as ever turned night to day. Nay, it shall be an overflowing bumper an you will; and I will drink it *super naculum.*—And how stands the great Madam?"

" Stoutly against all change," answered my Lord—" Little Anthony can make nought of her."

" Then he shall bring her influence to nought. Hark in thy ear. Thou knowest—(Here he whispered so low that Julian could not catch the sound.)

" Know him!" answered the other—" Know Ned of the Island!—To be sure I do."

"He is the man that shall knot the great fiddle-strings that have snapped. Say I told you so; and thereupon I give thee his health."

"And thereupon I pledge thee," said the young nobleman, "which on any other argument I were loth to do—thinking of Ned as somewhat the cut of a villain."

"Granted, man—granted," said the other,—"a very thorough-paced rascal; but able, my lord, able and necessary; and, in this plan, indispensable. Psha!—This champagne turns stronger as it gets older, I think."

"Hark, mine honest fellow," said the courtier; "I would thou wouldst give me some item of all this mystery. Thou hast it, I know; for whom do men entrust but trusty Chiffinch?"

"It is your pleasure to say so, my lord," answered Smith, (whom we shall hereafter call by his real name of Chiffinch,) with much drunken gravity, for his speech had become a little altered by his copious libations in the course of the evening—"few men know more, or say less, than I do; and it well becomes my station. *Conticuere omnes*, as the grammar hath it—all men should learn to hold their tongue."

"Excepting with a friend, Tom—excepting with a friend. Thou wilt never be such a dog-bolt to refuse a hint to a friend? Come, you get too wise and statesman-like for your office—The ligatures of thy most peasantly jacket there are like to burst with thy secret. Come, undo a button, man; it is for the health of thy constitution—Let out a reef; and let thy chosen friend know what is meditating. Thou knowest I am as true as thyself to little Anthony, if he can but get uppermost."

"*If*, thou lordly infidel!" said Chiffinch—"talkst thou to me of *ifs*?—There is neither *if* nor *and* in the matter. The great Madam shall be pulled a peg down—the great Plot screwed a peg or two up. Thou knowest Ned?—Honest Ned had a brother's death to revenge."

"I have heard so," said the nobleman; "and that his persevering resentment of that injury was one of the few points which seemed to be a sort of heathenish virtue in him."

"Well," continued Chiffinch, "in manœuvring to bring about this revenge, which he hath laboured at many a day, he hath discovered a treasure."

"What!—In the Isle of Man?" said his companion.

"Assure yourself of it.—She is a creature so lovely, that she needs but be seen, to put down every one of the favourites from Portsmouth and Cleveland, down to that three-penny baggage, Mistress Nelly."

"By my word, Chiffinch," said my Lord, "that is a reinforcement after the fashion of thine own best tactics. But bethink thee, man! To make such a conquest, there wants more than a cherry-cheek and a bright eye—there must be wit—wit, man, and manners, and a little sense besides, to keep influence when it is gotten."

"Psha! will you tell me what goes to this vocation?" said Chiffinch. "Here, pledge me her health in a brimmer.—Nay, you shall do it on knees too.—Never such a triumphant beauty was seen—I went to church on purpose, for the first time these ten years—Yet I lie, it was not to church neither—it was to chapel."

"To chapel!—What the devil, is she a Puritan?" exclaimed the other courtier.

"To be sure she is. Do you think I would be

accessary to bringing a Papist into favour in these times, when, as my good Lord said in the House, there should not be a Popish man-servant, nor a Popish maid-servant, not so much as dog or cat, left to bark or mew about the King !"

" But consider, Chiffie, the dislikelihood of her pleasing," said the noble courtier.—" What, old Rowley, with his wit, and love of wit—his wildness, and love of wildness—he form a league with a silly, scrupulous, unidea'd Puritan !—Not if she were Venus."

" Thou knowest nought of the matter," answered Chiffinch. " I tell thee, the fine contrast between the seeming saint and the falling sinner will give zest to the old gentleman's inclinations. If I do not know him, who does ?—His health, my lord, on your bare knee, as you would live to be of the bed-chamber."

" I pledge you most devoutly," answered his friend. " But you have not told me how the acquaintance is to be made ; for you cannot, I think, carry her to Whitehall."

" Aha, my dear lord, you would have the whole secret ! but that I cannot afford—I can spare a

friend a peep at my end, but no one must look on the means by which they are achieved."—So saying, he shook his drunken head most wisely.

The villainous design which this discourse implied, and which his heart told him was designed against Alice Bridgenorth, stirred Julian so extremely, that he involuntarily shifted his posture, and laid his hand on his sword hilt.

Chiffinch heard a rustling, and broke off, exclaiming, " Hark !—Zounds, something moved. I trust I have told the tale to no ears but thine."

' I will cut off any which have drank in but a syllable of thy words," said the nobleman ; and raising a candle, he took a hasty survey of the apartment.—Seeing nothing that could incur his menaced resentment, he replaced the light and continued ;—" Well, suppose the Belle Louise de Querouaille shoots from her high station in the firmament, how will you rear up the downfallen Plot again—for without that same Plot, think of it as thou wilt, we have no change of hands—and matters remain as they were, with a Protestant courtezan instead of a Papist—Little Anthony can but little speed without that Plot

of his—I believe, in my conscience, he begot it himself."

"Whoever begot it, he hath adopted it; and a thriving babe it has been to him. Well, then, though it lies out of my way, I will play Saint Peter again—up with t'other key, and unlock t'other mystery."

"Now thou speakest like a good fellow; and I will, with my own hands, unwire this fresh flask, to begin a brimmer to the success of thy achievement"

"Well, then," continued the communicative Chiffinch, "thou knowest that they have long had a nibbling at the old Countess of Derby—So Ned was sent down—he owes her an old accompt, thou knowest—with private instructions to possess himself of the island, if he could, by help of some of his old friends. He hath ever kept up spies upon her; and happy man was he, to think his hour of vengeance was come so nigh. But he missed his blow; and the old girl, being placed on her guard, was soon in a condition to make Ned smoke for it. Out of the island he came with little advantage for having entered it; when,

by some means—for the devil, I think, stands ever his friend—he obtained information concerning a messenger, whom her old Majesty of Man had sent to London to make party in her behalf. Ned stuck himself to this fellow—a raw, half-bred lad, son of an old blundering Cavalier of the old stamp, down in Derbyshire—and so managed the swain, that he brought him to the place where I was waiting, in anxious expectation of the pretty one I told you of. By Saint Anthony, for I will swear no meaner oath, I stared when I saw this great lout—not that the fellow is so ill-looked neither—I stared like—like—good now, help me to a simile."

"Like Saint Anthony's pig, an it were sleek," said the young lord; "your eyes, Chiffie, have the very blink of one. But what hath all this to do with the Plot. Hold—I have had wine enough."

"You shall not baulk me," said Chiffinch, and a jingling was heard, as if he were filling his comrade's glass with a very unsteady hand. "Hey—What the devil is the matter?—I used to carry my glass steady—very steady."

"Well, but this stranger."

"Why he swept at game and ragout as he would at spring beef or summer mutton. Never so unnurtured a cub—Knew no more what he eat than an infidel—I cursed him by my gods when I saw Chaubert's chef-d'œuvres glutted down so indifferent a throat. We took the freedom to spice his goblet a little, and ease him of his packet of letters; and the fool went on his way the next morning with a budget artificially filled with grey paper. Ned would have kept him, in hopes to have made a witness of him, but the boy was not of that mettle."

"How will you prove your letters?" said the courtier.

"La you there, my lord," said Chiffinch; "one may see with half an eye, for all your laced doublet, that you have been of the family of Furnival's, before your brother's death sent you to court. How prove the letters?—Why we have but let the sparrow fly with a string round his foot—We have him again so soon as we list."

"Why, thou art turned a very Machiavel, Chiffinch," said his friend. "But how if the

youth proved restiff?—I have heard these Peak men have hot heads and hard hands."

"Trouble not yourself—that was cared for, my lord," said Chiffinch—"his pistols might bark, but they could not bite."

"Most exquisite Chiffinch, thou art turned micher as well as padder—Can'st both rob a man and kidnap him?"

"Micher and padder—what terms be these?" said Chiffinch. "Methinks these are sounds to lug out upon. You will have me angry to the degree of falling foul—robber and kidnapper!"

"You mistake verb for noun-substantive," replied his lordship; "I said *rob* and *kidnap*—a man may do either once and away, without being professional."

"But not without spilling a little foolish noble blood, or some such red-coloured gear," said Chiffinch, starting up.

"Oh yes," said his lordship; "all this may be without these direful consequences, and so you will find to-morrow, when you return to England; for at present you are in the land of Champagne, Chiffie; and that you may continue so,

I drink thee this parting cup to line thy night-cap."

"I do not refuse your pledge," said Chiffinch; "but I drink to thee in dudgeon and in hostility—It is a cup of wrath, and a gage of battle. To-morrow, by dawn, I will have thee at point of fox, wert thou the last of the Savilles.—What the devil, think you I fear you because you are a lord?"

"Not so, Chiffinch," answered his companion. "I know thou fearest nothing but beans and bacon, washed down with bumpkin-like beer.—Adieu, sweet Chiffinch—to bed—Chiffinch—to bed."

So saying, he lifted a candle, and left the apartment. And Chiffinch, whom the last draught had nearly overpowered, had just strength enough left to do the same, muttering, as he staggered out, "Yes, he shall answer it—Dawn of day—D—n me—It is come already—Yonder's the dawn—No, d—n me, 'tis the fire glancing on the cursed red lattice—I am whistled drunk, I think—This comes of a country inn—It is the smell of the brandy in this cursed room—It could not be the

wine—Well, old Rowley shall send me no more errands in the country again—Steady, steady."

So saying, he reeled out of the apartment, leaving Peveril to think over the extraordinary conversation he had just heard.

The name of Chiffinch, the well-known minister of Charles's pleasures, was nearly allied to the part which he seemed about to play in the present intrigue; but that Christian, whom he had always supposed a Puritan as strict as his brother-in-law Bridgenorth, should be associated with him in a plot so infamous, seemed alike unnatural and monstrous. The near relationship might blind Bridgenorth, and warrant him in confiding his daughter to such a man's charge; but what a wretch he must be, that could coolly meditate such an ignominous abuse of his trust. In doubt whether he could trust for a moment the tale which Chiffinch had revealed, he hastily examined his packet, and found that the seal-skin case in which it had been wrapt up, now only contained an equal quantity of waste paper. If he had wanted further confirmation, the failure of the shot which he had fired at Bridgenorth, and of which the

wadding only struck him, shewed that his arms had been tampered with. He examined the pistol which still remained charged, and found that the ball had been drawn. "May I perish," said he to himself, "amid these villainous intrigues, but thou shalt be more surely loaded, and to better purpose! The contents of these papers may undo my benefactress—their having been found on me, may ruin my father—that I have been the bearer of them, may cost, in these fiery times, my own life—that I care least for—they form a branch of the scheme laid against the honour and happiness of a creature so innocent, that it is almost sin to think of her within the neighbourhood of such infamous knaves. I will recover the letters at all risks—But how?—that is to be thought on.—Lance is stout and trusty; and when a bold deed is once resolved upon, there never yet lacked the means of executing it."

His host now entered, with an apology for his long absence; and after providing Peveril with some refreshments, invited him to accept, for his night-quarters, the accommodation of a remote hay-loft, which he was to share with his comrade;

professing, at the same time, he could hardly have afforded them this courtesy, but out of deference to the exquisite talents of Lance Outram, as assistant at the tap; where, indeed, it seems probable that he, as well as the admiring landlord, did that evening contrive to drink nearly as much liquor as they drew.

But Lance was a seasoned vessel, on whom liquor made no lasting impression; so that when Peveril awaked that trusty follower at dawn, he found him cool enough to comprehend and enter into the design which he expressed, of recovering the letters which had been abstracted from his person.

Having considered the whole matter with much attention, Lance shrugged, grinned, and scratched his head; and at length manfully expressed his resolution. "Well, my naunt speaks truth in her old saw,—

'He that serves Peveril munna be slack,
Neither for weather, nor yet for wrack.'

And then again, my good dame was wont to say, that whenever Peveril was in a broil, Outram

was in a stew; so I will never bear a base mind, but even hold a part with you, as my fathers have done with yours, for four generations, whatever more."

"Spoken like a most gallant Outram," said Julian; "and were we but rid of that puppy lord and his retinue, we two could easily deal with the other three."

"Two Londoners and a Frenchman?" said Lance,—"I would take them in mine own hand. And as for my Lord Saville, as they call him, I heard word last night that he and all his men of gilded gingerbread—that looked at an honest fellow like me, as if they were the ore and I the dross—are all to be off this morning to some races, or such like junkettings, about Tutberry. It was that brought him down here, where he met this other civet-cat by accident."

In truth, even as Lance spoke, a trampling was heard of horses in the yard; and from the hatch of their hay-loft, they beheld Lord Saville's attendants mustered, and ready to set out so soon as he should make his appearance.

"So ho, Master Jeremy," said one of the fel-

lows, to a sort of principal attendant, who just came out of the house, "methinks the wine has proved a sleeping cup to my lord this morning."

"No," answered Jeremy, "he hath been up before light, writing letters for London; and to punish thy irreverence, thou, Jonathan, shalt be the man to ride back with them."

"And so to miss the race," said Jonathan, sulkily; "I thank you for this good turn, good Master Jeremy; and hang me if I forget it."

Further discussion was cut short by the appearance of the young nobleman, who, as he came out of the inn, said to Jeremy, "These be the letters. Let one of the knaves ride to London for life and death, and deliver them as directed; and the rest of them get to horse and follow me."

Jeremy gave Jonathan the packet with a malicious smile; and the disappointed groom turned his horse's head sulkily towards London, while Lord Saville, and the rest of his retinue, rode briskly off in an opposite direction, pursued by the benedictions of the host and his family, who stood bowing and curtseying at the door, in gra-

titude, doubtless, for the receipt of an unconscionable reckoning.

It was full three hours after their departure that Chiffinch lounged into the room in which they had supped, in a brocaded night-gown, and green velvet cap, turned up with the most costly Brussels lace. He seemed but half awake; and it was with drowsy voice that he called for a cup of cold small beer. His manner and appearance were those of a man who had wrestled hard with Bacchus on the preceding evening, and had scarce recovered the effects of his contest with the jolly god. Lance, instructed by his master to watch the motions of the courtier, officiously attended with the cooling beverage he called for, pleading, as an excuse to the landlord, his wish to see a Londoner in his morning gown and cap.

No sooner had Chiffinch taken his morning draught, than he inquired after Lord Saville.

"His lordship was mounted and away by peep of dawn," was Lance's reply.

"What the devil!" exclaimed Chiffinch;

"why this is scarce civil.—What, off for the races with his whole retinue?"

"All but one," replied Lance, "whom his lordship sent back to London with letters."

"To London with letters!" said Chiffinch. "Why, I am for London, and could have saved his express a labour.—But stop—hold—I begin to recollect—d——n, can I have blabbed?—I have—I have—I remember it all now—I have blabbed; and to the very weazel of the court, who sucks the yolk out of every man's secret. Furies and fire—that my afternoons should ruin my mornings thus!—I must turn boon companion and good fellow in my cups—and have my confidences and my quarrels—my friends and my enemies, with a plague to me, as if any one could do a man much good or harm but his own self. His messenger must be stopped though—I will put a spoke in his wheel.—Hark ye, drawer-fellow—call my groom hither—call Tom Beacon."

Lance obeyed; but failed not, when he had introduced the domestic, to remain in the apartment, in order to hear what should pass betwixt him and his master.

"Hark ye, Tom," said Chiffinch, "here are five pieces for you."

"What's to be done now, I trow?" said Tom, without even the ceremony of returning thanks, which he was probably well aware would not be received even in part payment of the debt he was incurring.

"Mount your fleet nag, Tom—ride like the devil—overtake the groom whom Lord Saville dispatched to London this morning—lame his horse—break his bones—fill him as drunk as the Baltic sea; or do whatever may best and most effectually stop his journey.—Why does the lout stand there without answering me? Doest understand me?"

"Why, ay, Master Chiffinch," said Tom; "and so I am thinking doth this honest man here, who need not have heard quite so much of your counsel, an it had been your will."

"I am bewitched this morning," said Chiffinch to himself, "or else the champagne runs in my head still. My brain has become the very lowlands of Holland—a gill-cup would inundate it.—

Hark thee, fellow," he added, addressing Lance, "keep my counsel—there is a wager betwixt Lord Saville and me, which of us shall first have a letter in London. Here is to drink my health, and luck on my side. Say nothing of it; but help Tom to his nag.—Tom, ere thou startest, come for thy credentials—I will give thee a letter to the Duke of Bucks, that may be evidence thou wert first in town."

Tom Beacon ducked and exit; and Lance, after having made some shew of helping him to horse, ran back to tell his master the joyful intelligence, that a lucky accident had abated Chiffinch's party to their own number.

Peveril immediately ordered his horses to be got ready; and so soon as Tom Beacon was dispatched towards London on a rapid trot, had the satisfaction to observe Chiffinch, with his favourite Chaubert, mount to pursue the same journey, though at a more moderate rate. He permitted them to attain such a distance, that they might be dogged without suspicion; then paid his reckoning, mounted his horse, and followed,

keeping his men carefully in view, until he should come to a place proper for the enterprize which he meditated.

It had been Peveril's intention, that when they came to some solitary part of the road, they should gradually mend their pace, until they overtook Chaubert—that Lance Outram should then drop behind, in order to assail the man of spits and stoves, while he himself, spurring onward, should grapple with Chiffinch. But this scheme presupposed that the master and servant should travel in the usual manner—the latter riding a few yards behind the former. Whereas, such and so interesting were the subjects of discussion betwixt Chiffinch and the French cook, that without heeding the rules of etiquette, they rode on together, amicably abreast, carrying on a conversation on the mysteries of the table, which the ancient Comus, or a modern gastronome, might have listened to with pleasure. It was, therefore, necessary to venture on them both at once.

For this purpose, when they saw a long tract of road before them, unvaried by the least ap-

pearance of man, beast, or human habitation, they began to mend their pace, that they might come up to Chiffinch, without giving him any alarm, by a sudden and suspicious increase of haste. In this manner, they lessened the distance which separated them till they were within about twenty yards, when Peveril, afraid that Chiffinch might recognize him at a nearer approach, and so trust to his horse's heels, made Lance the signal to charge.

At the sudden increase of their speed, and the noise with which it was necessarily attended, Chiffinch looked around, but had time to do no more, for Lance, who had pricked his poney (which was much more speedy than Julian's horse) into full gallop, pushed, without ceremony, betwixt the courtier and his attendant; and ere Chaubert had time for more than one exclamation, he upset both horse and Frenchman; *mortbleu!* thrilling from his tongue as he rolled on the ground amongst the various articles of his occupation; which, escaping from the budget in which he bore them, lay tumbled upon the highway in strange disorder; while Lance, springing from

his palfrey, commanded his foeman to be still, under no less a penalty than that of death, if he attempted to rise.

Before Chiffinch could avenge his trusty follower's downfall, his own bridle was seized by Julian, who presented a pistol with the other hand, and commanded him to stand or die.

Chiffinch, though effeminate, was no coward He stood still as commanded, and said, with firmness, "Rogue, you have taken me at surprise. If you are a highwayman, there is my purse. Do us no bodily harm, and spare the budget of spices and sauces."

"Look you, Master Chiffinch," said Peveril, "this is no time for dallying. I am no highwayman, but a man of honour. Give me back that packet which you stole from me the other night; or, by all that is good, I will send a brace of balls through you, and search for it at leisure."

"What night?—What packet?" answered Chiffinch, confused; yet willing to protract the time for the chance of assistance, or to put Peveril off his guard. "I know nothing of what you mean. If you are a man of honour, let me draw

my sword, and I will do you right, as a gentleman should do to another."

"Dishonourable rascal!" said Peveril, "you escape not in this manner. You plundered me when you had me at odds; and I am not the fool to let my advantage escape, now that my turn is come. Yield up the packet; and then, if you will, I will fight you on equal terms. But first," he reiterated, "yield up the packet, or I will instantly send you where the tenor of your life will be hard to answer for."

The tone of Peveril's voice, the fierceness of his eye, and the manner in which he held the loaded weapon, within a hand's-breadth of Chiffinch's head, convinced the last there was neither room for compromise, nor time for trifling. He thrust his hand into a side-pocket of his cloak, and with visible reluctance produced those papers and dispatches with which Julian had been entrusted by the Countess of Derby.

"They are five in number," said Julian; "and you have given me only four. Your life depends on full restitution."

"It escaped from my hand," said Chiffinch,

producing the missing document—" There it is Now, sir, your pleasure is fulfilled, unless," he added, sulkily, " you design either murder or further robbery."

" Base wretch !" said Peveril, withdrawing his pistol, yet keeping a watchful eye on Chiffinch's motions, " thou art unworthy any honest man's sword; and yet if you dare draw your own, as you proposed but now, I am willing to give you a chance upon fair equality of terms."

" Equality !" said Chiffinch, sneeringly; " yes, a proper equality—sword and pistol against single rapier, and two men upon one, for Chaubert is no fighter. No, sir; I shall seek amends upon some more fitting occasion, and with more equal weapons."

" By back-biting, or by poison, base pander," said Julian; " these are thy means of vengeance. But mark me—I know your vile purpose respecting a lady who is too worthy that her name should be uttered in such a worthless ear. Thou hast done me one injury, and thou see'st I have repaid it. But prosecute this farther villainy, and be assured I will put thee to death like a foul reptile,

whose very slaver is fatal to humanity. Rely upon this, as if Machiavel had sworn it; for so sure as you keep your purpose, so surely will I prosecute my revenge.—Follow me, Lance, and leave him to think on what I have told him."

Lance had, after the first shock, sustained a very easy part in this rencontre; for all he had to do, was to point the butt of his whip, in the manner of a gun, at the intimidated Frenchman, who, lying on his back, and gazing at random on the skies, had as little the power or purpose of resistance as any pig which had ever come under his own slaughter-knife.

Summoned by his master from the easy duty of guarding such an unresisting prisoner, Lance remounted his horse, and they both rode off, leaving their discomfited antagonists to console themselves for their misadventure as they best could. But consolation was hard to come by in the circumstances. The French artist had to lament the dispersion of his spices, and the destruction of his magazine of sauces—an enchanter despoiled of his magic wand and talisman, could scarce have been in more desperate extremity. Chiffinch had

to mourn the downfal of his intrigue, and its premature discovery. "To this fellow, at least," he thought, "I can have bragged none—here my evil genius alone has betrayed me. With this infernal discovery, which may cost me so dear on all hands, champagne had nought to do. If there be a flask left unbroken, I will drink it after dinner, and try if it may not even yet suggest some scheme of redemption and of revenge."

With this manly resolution, he prosecuted his journey to London.

CHAPTER V.

A man so various, that he seem'd to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
Stiff in opinions—always in the wrong—
Was every thing by starts, but nothing long;
Who, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then, all for women, painting, fiddling, drinking;
Besides a thousand freaks that died in thinking.

DRYDEN.

We must now transport the reader to the magnificent hotel in ——— Street, inhabited at this time by the celebrated George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whom Dryden has doomed to a painful immortality by the few lines which we have prefixed to this chapter. Amid the gay and the licentious of the laughing court of Charles, the Duke was the most licentious and most gay; yet, while expending a princely fortune, a strong

constitution, and excellent talents, in pursuit of frivolous pleasures, he failed not to nourish deeper and more extensive designs; in which he only failed from want of that fixed purpose and regulated perseverance essential to all important enterprizes, but particularly in politics.

It was long past noon; and the usual hour of the Duke's levee—if any thing could be termed usual where all was irregular—had been long past. His hall was filled with lacqueys and footmen, in the most splendid liveries; the interior apartments, with the gentlemen and pages of his household, arrayed as persons of the first quality, and in that respect, rather exceeding than falling short of the Duke in personal splendour. But his anti-chamber, in particular, might be compared to a gathering of eagles to the slaughter, were not the simile too dignified to express that vile race, who, by a hundred devices all tending to one common end, live upon the wants of needy greatness, or administer to the pleasures of summer-teeming luxury, or stimulate the wild wishes of lavish and wasteful extravagance, by devising new modes and fresh motives of profusion. There

stood the Projector, with his mysterious brow, promising unbounded wealth to whomsoever might chuse to furnish the small preliminary sum necessary to change egg-shells into the great *arcanum.* There was Captain Seagull, undertaker for a foreign settlement, with the map under his arm of Indian or American kingdoms, beautiful as the primitive Eden, waiting the bold occupants, for whom a generous patron should equip two brigantines and a fly-boat. Thither came, fast and frequent, the gamesters, in their different forms and calling. This, light, young, gay in appearance, the thoughtless youth of wit and pleasure—the pigeon rather than the rook—but at heart the same sly, shrewd, cold-blooded calculator as yonder old hard-featured professor of the same science, whose eyes are grown dim with watching the dice at midnight; and whose fingers are even now assisting his mental computation of chances and of odds. The fine arts, too—I would it were otherwise—have their professors amongst this sordid train. The poor poet, half ashamed, in spite of habit, of the part which he is about to perform, and abashed by consciousness at once of his base

motive and his shabby black coat, lurks in yonder corner for the favourable moment to offer his dedication. Much better attired, the architect presents his splendid vision of front and wings, and designs a palace, the expence of which may transfer the employer to a jail. But uppermost of all, the favourite musician, or singer, who waits on my lord to receive, in solid gold, the value of the dulcet sounds which solaced the banquet of the preceding evening.

Such, and many such like, were the morning attendants of the Duke of Buckingham—all genuine descendants of the daughter of the horseleech, whose cry is "Give, give."

But the levee of his grace contained other and very different characters; and was indeed as various as his own opinions and pursuits. Besides many of the young nobility and wealthy gentry of England, who made his Grace the glass at which they dressed themselves for the day, and who learned from him how to travel, with the newest and best grace, the general Road to Ruin; there were others of a graver character—discarded statesmen, political spies, opposition orators,

servile tools of administration, men who met not elsewhere, but who regarded the Duke's mansion as a sort of neutral ground; sure, that if he was not of their opinion to-day, the very circumstance rendered it most likely he should think with them to-morrow. The Puritans themselves did not shun intercourse with a man whose talents must have rendered him formidable, even if they had not been united with high rank and an immense fortune. Several grave personages, with black suits, short cloaks, and bandstrings of a formal cut, were mingled, as we see their portraits in a gallery of paintings, among the gallants who ruffled in silk and embroidery. It is true, they escaped the scandal of being supposed intimates of the Duke, by their business being supposed to refer to money matters. Whether these grave and professing citizens mixed politics with money-lending, was not known; but it had been long observed, that the Jews, who in general confine themselves to the latter department, had become for some time faithful attendants at the Duke's levee.

It was high-tide in the anti-chamber, and had

been so for more than an hour, ere the Duke's gentleman in ordinary ventured into his bed-chamber, carefully darkened, so as to make midnight at noon-day, to know his Grace's pleasure. His soft and serene whisper, in which he asked whether it were his Grace's pleasure to rise, was briefly and sharply answered by the counter questions, " Who waits ?—What's o'clock ?"

" It is Jerningham, your Grace," said the attendant. " It is one afternoon; and your Grace appointed some of the people without at eleven."

" Who are they ?—What do they want ?"

" A message from Whitehall, your Grace."

" Psha ! it will keep cold. Those who make all others wait, will be the better of waiting in their turn. Were I to be guilty of ill-breeding, it should rather be to a King than a beggar."

" The gentlemen from the city."

" I am tired of them—tired of their all cant, and no religion—all Protestantism, and no charity. Tell them to go to Shaftesbury—to Aldersgate Street with them—that's the best market for their wares."

"Jockey, my lord, from Newmarket."

"Let him ride to the devil—he has horse of mine, and spurs of his own. Any more?"

"The whole anti-chamber is full, my lord—knights and squires, doctors and dicers."

"The dicers, with the doctors in their pockets, I presume."

"Counts, captains, and clergymen."

"You are alliterative, Jerningham," said the Duke; "and that is a proof you are poetical. Hand me my writing things."

Getting half out of bed—thrusting one arm into a brocade night-gown, deeply furred with sables, and one foot into a velvet slipper, while the other pressed in primitive nudity the rich carpet—his Grace, without thinking farther on the assembly without, began to pen a few lines of a satirical poem; then suddenly stopped—threw the pen into the chimney—exclaimed that the humour was past—and asked his attendant if there were any letters. Jerningham produced a huge packet.

"What the devil!" said his Grace, "do you think I will read all these? I am like Clarence,

who asked a cup of wine, and was soused into a butt of sack. I mean is there any thing which presses?"

"This letter, your Grace," said Jerningham, "concerning the Yorkshire mortgage."

"Did I not bid thee carry it to old Gatheral, my steward?"

"I did, my lord," answered the other; "but Gatheral says there are difficulties."

"Let the usurers foreclose, then—there is no difficulty in that; and out of a hundred manors I shall scarce miss one," answered the Duke. "And hark ye, bring me my chocolate."

"Nay, my lord, Gatheral does not say it is impossible—only difficult."

"And what is the use of him, if he cannot make it easy? But you are all born to make difficulties," replied the Duke.

"Nay, if your Grace approves the terms in this schedule, and pleases to sign it, Gatheral will undertake for the matter," answered Jerningham.

"And could you not have said so at first, you blockhead," said the Duke, signing the paper

without looking at the contents—"What other letters? And remember, I must be plagued with no more business."

"Billets doux, my lord—five or six of them. This left at the porter's-lodge by a vizard mask."

"Psha!" answered the Duke, tossing them over, while his attendant assisted in dressing him—"an acquaintance of a quarter's standing."

"This given to one of the pages by my Lady ——'s waiting woman."

"Plague on it—a Jeremiade on the subject of perjury and treachery, and not a single new line to the old tune," said the Duke, glancing over the billet. "Here is the old cant—*cruel man—broken vows—Heaven's just revenge.* Why the woman is thinking of murder—not of love. No one should pretend to write upon so threadbare a topic without having at least some novelty of expression. *The despairing Araminta*—Lie there fair desperate. And this—how comes it?"

"Flung into the window of the hall, by a fellow who run off at full speed," answered Jerni

"This is a better text," said the Duke; "and yet it is an old one too—three weeks old at least—The little Countess with the jealous Lord—I should not care a farthing for her, save for that same jealous lord—Plague on't, and he's gone down to the country—*this evening—in silence and safety—written with a quill pulled from the wing of Cupid*—Your ladyship has left him pen-feathers enough to fly away with—better clipped his wings when you had caught him, my lady—And *so confident of her Buckingham's faith*—I hate confidence in a young person—She must be taught better—I will not go."

"Your Grace will not be so cruel," said Jerningham.

"Thou art a compassionate fellow, Jerningham; but conceit must be punished."

"But if your Lordship should resume your fancy for her?"

"Why, then, you must swear the billet doux miscarried," answered the Duke. "And stay, a thought strikes me—it shall miscarry in great style. Hark ye—Is—what is the fellow's name—the poet—is he yonder?"

"There are six gentlemen, sir, who, from the reams of paper in their pocket, and the thread-bare seams at their elbows, appear to wear the livery of the Muses."

"Poetical once more, Jerningham. He, I mean, who wrote the last lampoon," said the Duke.

"To whom your Grace said you owed five pieces and a beating," replied Jerningham.

"The money for his satire, and the cudgel for his praise—Good—Find him, give him the five pieces, and thrust the Countess's billet-doux—Hold—take Araminta's and the rest of them—thrust them all into his portfolio—All will come out at the Wits' Coffee-house; and if the promulgator be not cudgelled into all the colours of the rainbow, there is no spite in woman, no faith in crabtree, or pith in heart of oak—Araminta's wrath alone would overburthen one pair of mortal shoulders."

"But, my Lord Duke," said his attendant, "this Settle is so dull a rascal, that nothing he can write will take."

"Then as we have given him steel to head the

arrow," said the Duke, "we will give him wings to waft it with—wood, he has enough of his own to make a shaft or bolt of. Hand me my own unfinished lampoon—give it to him with the letters—let him make what he can of them all."

"My Lord Duke—I crave pardon—but your Grace's style will be discovered; and though the ladies' names are not at the letters, yet they will be traced."

"I would have it so, you blockhead. Have you lived with me so long, and cannot discover that the eclat of an intrigue is, with me, worth all the rest of it?"

"But the danger, my Lord Duke?" replied Jerningham. "There are husbands, brothers, friends, whose revenge may be awakened."

"And beaten to sleep again," said Buckingham, haughtily. "I have Black Will and his cudgel for plebeian grumblers; and those of quality I can deal with myself. I lack breathing and exercise of late."

"But yet your Grace——"

"Hold your peace, fool! I tell you that your poor dwarfish spirit cannot measure the scope of

mine. I tell thee I would have the course of my life a torrent—I am weary of easy achievements, and wish for obstacles, that I can sweep before my irresistible course."

Another gentleman now entered the apartment. "I humbly crave your Grace's pardon," he said; "but Master Christian is so importunate for admission instantly, that I am obliged to take your Grace's pleasure."

"Tell him to call three hours hence. Damn his politic pate, that would make all men dance after his pipe!"

"I thank you for the compliment, my Lord Duke," said Christian, entering the apartment in somewhat a more courtly garb, but with the same unpretending and undistinguished mien, and in the same placid and indifferent manner with which he had accosted Julian Peveril upon different occasions during his journey to London. "It is precisely my present object to pipe to you; and you may dance to your own profit, if you will."

"On my word, Master Christian," said the Duke, haughtily, "the affair should be weighty, that removes ceremony so entirely from betwixt

us. If it relates to the subject of our last conversation, I must request our interview be postponed to some future opportunity. I am engaged in an affair of some weight." Then turning his back on Christian, he went on with his conversation with Jerningham. "Find the person you wot of, and give him the papers; and hark ye, give him this gold to pay for the shaft of his arrow—the steel-head and peacock's-wing we have already provided."

"This is all well, my lord," said Christian, calmly, and taking his seat at the same time in an easy chair at some distance; "but your Grace's levity is no match for my equanimity. It is necessary I should speak with you; and I will await your Grace's leisure in this apartment."

"*Very* well, sir," said the Duke, peevishly; "if an evil is to be undergone, the sooner it is over the better—I can take measures to prevent its being renewed. So let me hear your errand without further delay."

"I will wait till your Grace's toilette is completed," said Christian, with the indifferent tone which was natural to him. "What I have to say must be between ourselves."

" Begone, Jerningham ; and remain without till I call. Leave my doublet on the couch.—How now ? I have worn this cloth of silver a hundred times."

" Only twice, if it please your Grace," replied Jerningham.

"As well twenty times—keep it for yourself, or give it to my valet, if you are too proud of your gentility."

" Your Grace has made better men than me wear your cast clothes," said Jerningham, submissively.

" Thou art sharp, Jerningham," said the Duke, —" in one sense I have, and I may again. So now, that pearl-coloured thing will do with the ribband and George. Get away with thee.—And now that he is gone, Master Christian, may I once more crave your pleasure ?"

" My Lord Duke," said Christian, " you are a worshipper of difficulties in state affairs, as in love matters."

" I trust you have been no eaves-dropper, Master Christian," replied the Duke ; " it scarce argues the respect due to me, or to my roof."

"I know not what you mean, my lord," replied Christian.

"Nay, I care not if the whole world heard what I said but now to Jerningham. But to the matter," replied the Duke of Buckingham.

"Your Grace is so much occupied with conquests over the fair and over the witty, that you have perhaps forgotten what a stake you have in the little Island of Man."

"Not a whit, Master Christian. I remember well enough that my round-headed father-in-law, Fairfax, had the island from the Long Parliament; and was ass enough to quit hold of it at the Restoration, when, if he had closed his clutches, and held fast, like a true bird of prey, as he should have done, he might have kept it for him and his. It had been a rare thing to have had a little kingdom—made laws of my own—had my Chancellor with seals and mace—I would have taught Jerningham, in half a day, to look as wise, walk as stiffly, and speak as sillily, as Harry Bennet."

"You might have done this, and more, if it had pleased your Grace."

"Ay, and if it had pleased my Grace, thou, Ned Christian, shouldst have been the Jack Ketch of my dominions."

"*I* your Jack Ketch, my lord?" said Christian, more in a tone of surprise than of displeasure.

"Why, ay; thou hast been perpetually intriguing against the life of yonder poor old woman. It were a kingdom to thee to gratify thy spleen with thy own hands."

"I only seek justice against the Countess," said Christian.

"And the end of justice is always a gibbet," said the Duke.

"Be it so," answered Christian. "Well, the Countess is in the Plot."

"The devil confound the Plot, as I believe he first invented it," said the Duke of Buckingham; "I have heard of nothing else for months. If one must go to hell, I would it were by some new road, and in gentlemen's company. I should not like to travel with Oates, Bedlow, and the rest of that famous cloud of witnesses."

"Your Grace is then resolved to forego all

the advantages which may arise? If the House of Derby fall under forfeiture, the grant to Fairfax, now worthily represented by your Duchess, revives; and you become the Lord and Sovereign of Man."

"In right of a woman," said the Duke; "but, in troth, my godly dame owes me some advantage for having lived the first year of our marriage with her and old Black Tom, her grim, fighting, puritanic father. A man might as well have married the Devil's daughter, and set up house-keeping with his father-in-law."

"I understand you are willing, then, to join your interest for a heave at the House of Derby, my Lord Duke?"

"As they are unlawfully possessed of my wife's kingdom, they certainly can expect no favour at my hand. But thou knowest there is an interest at Whitehall predominant over mine."

"That is only by your Grace's sufferance," said Christian.

"No, no; I tell thee a hundred times, no," said the Duke, rousing himself to anger at the recollection. "I tell thee that base courtezan,

the Duchess of Portsmouth, hath impudently set herself to thwart and contradict me; and Charles has given me both cloudy looks and hard words before the court. I would he could but guess what is the offence between her and me! I would he but knew that! But I will have her plumes plucked, or my name is not Villiers. A worthless French fille-de-joie to brave me thus! Christian, thou art right; there is no passion so spirit-stirring as revenge. I will patronize the Plot, if it be but to spite her, and make it impossible for the King to uphold her."

As the Duke spoke, he gradually wrought himself into a passion, and traversed the apartment with as much vehemence as if the only object he had on earth was to deprive the Duchess of her power and favour with the King. Christian smiled internally to see him approaching the state of mind in which he was most easily worked upon, and judiciously kept silence, until the Duke called out to him in a pet, "Well, Sir Oracle, you that have laid so many schemes to supplant this she-wolf of Gaul, where are all your contrivances now?—Where is the exquisite

beauty who was to catch the Sovereign's eye at the first glance?—Chiffinch, hath he seen her? and what does he say, that exquisite critic in beauty and blanc-mange, women, and wine?"

"He has *seen* and approves, but has not yet heard her; and her speech answers to all the rest. We came here yesterday; and to-day I intend to introduce Chiffinch to her, the instant he arrives from the country; and I expect him every hour. I am but afraid of the damsel's peevish virtue, for she hath been brought up after the fashion of our grandmothers—our mothers had better sense."

"What! so fair, so young, so quick-witted, and so difficult?" said the Duke. "By your leave, you shall introduce me as well as Chiffinch."

"That your Grace may cure her of her intractable modesty?" said Christian.

"Why, it will but teach her to stand in her own light. Kings do not love to court and sue; they should have their game run down for them."

"Under your Grace's favour," said Christian, "this cannot be—*Non omnibus dormio*—Your

Grace knows the classic allusion. If this maiden become a Prince's favourite, rank gilds the shame and the sin. But to any under Majesty, she must not vail topsail."

"Why, thou suspicious fool, I was but in jest," said the Duke. "Do you think I would interfere to spoil a plan so much to my own advantage as that which you have laid before me?"

Christian smiled and shook his head. "My lord," he said, "I know your Grace as well, or better, perhaps, than you know yourself. To spoil a well-concerted intrigue by some cross stroke of your own, would give you more pleasure, than to bring it to a successful termination according to the plans of others. But Shaftesbury, and all concerned, have determined that our scheme shall at least have fair play. We reckon, therefore, on your help; and—forgive me when I say so—we will not permit ourselves to be impeded by your levity and fickleness of purpose."

"Who?—I light and fickle of purpose?" said the Duke. "You see me here as resolved as any

of you, to dispossess the mistress, and to carry on the Plot; these are the only two things I live for in this world. No one can play the man of business like me, when I please, to the very filing and labelling of my letters. I am regular as a scrivener."

"You have Chiffinch's letter from the country; he told me he had written to you about some passages betwixt him and the young Lord Saville."

"He did so—he did so," said the Duke, looking among his letters; "but I see not his letter just now—I scarcely noted the contents—I was busy when it came—but I have it safely."

"You should have acted on it. The fool suffered himself to be choused out of his secret, and prayed you to see that my lord's messenger got not to the Duchess with some dispatches which he sent up from Derbyshire, betraying our mystery."

The Duke was now alarmed, and rang the bell hastily. Jerningham appeared. "Where is the letter I had from Master Chiffinch some hours since?"

"If it be not amongst those your Grace has before you, I know nothing of it," said Jerningham. "I saw none such arrive."

"You lie, you rascal," said Buckingham; "have you a right to remember better than I do?"

"If your Grace will forgive me reminding you, you have scarce opened a letter this week," said his gentleman.

"Did you ever hear such a provoking rascal?" said the Duke. "He might be a witness in the Plot. He has knocked my character for regularity entirely on the head with his damned counter-evidence."

"Your Grace's talent and capacity will at least remain unimpeached," said Christian; "and it is those that must serve yourself and your friends. If I might advise, you will hasten to court, and lay some foundation for the impression we wish to make. If your Grace can take the first word, and throw out a hint to crossbite Saville, it will be well. But above all, keep the King's ear employed, which no one can do so well as you. Leave Chiffinch to fill his heart with a

proper object. Another thing is, there is a block-headly old Cavalier, who must needs be a bustler in the Countess of Derby's behalf—he is fast in hold, with the whole tribe of witnesses at his haunches."

"Nay, then, take him, Topham."

"Topham has taken him already, my lord," said Christian; "and there is, besides, a young gallant, a son of the said Knight, who was bred in the household of the Countess of Derby, and who has brought letters from her to the Provincial of the Jesuits, and others in London."

"What are their names?" said the Duke, drily.

"Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle, in Derbyshire, and his son Julian."

"What! Peveril of the Peak?" said the Duke—"a stout old Cavalier as ever swore an oath—A Worcester-man too—and in truth a man of all work, when blows were going. I will not consent to his ruin, Christian. These fellows must be flogged off such false scents—flogged, in every sense, they must, and will be, when the nation comes to their eye-sight again."

" It is of more than the last importance, in the mean time, to the furtherance of our plan," said Christian, " that your Grace should stand for a space between them and the King's favour. The youth hath influence with the maiden, which we should find scarce favourable to our views; besides, her father holds him as high as he can any one who is no such Puritanic fool as himself."

" Well, most Christian Christian," said the Duke, " I have heard your commands at length. I will endeavour to stop the earths under the throne, that neither the lord, knight, nor squire in question, will find it possible to burrow there. For the fair one, I must leave Chiffinch and you to manage her introduction to her high destinies, since I am not to be trusted. Adieu, most Christian Christian."*

He fixed his eyes on him, and then exclaimed, as he shut the door of the apartment,—" Most profligate and damnable villain! and what provokes me most of all, is the knave's composed insolence. Your Grace will do this—and your

Grace will condescend to do that—A pretty puppet I should be, to play the second part, or rather the third, in such a scheme! No, they shall all walk according to my purpose, or I will cross them. I will find this girl out in spite of them, and judge if their scheme is like to be successful. If so, she shall be mine—mine entirely, before she becomes the King's; and I will command her who is to guide Charles.—Jerningham, (his gentleman re-entered,) cause Christian to be dogged wherever he goes, for the next four-and-twenty hours, and find out where he visits a female newly come to town.—You smile, you knave?"

"I did but suspect a fresh rival to Araminta and the little Countess," said Jerningham.

"Away to your business, knave," said the Duke, "and let me think of mine.—To subdue a Puritan in Esse—a King's favourite in Posse—the very muster of western beauties—that is point first. The impudence of this Manx mongrel to be corrected—the pride of Madame la Duchesse to be pulled down—an important state intrigue to be furthered, or baffled, as circumstances ren-

der most to my own honour and glory—I wished for business but now, and I have got enough of it. But Buckingham will keep his own steerage-way through shoal and through weather."

CHAPTER VI.

——Mark you this, Bassanio—
The devil can quote scripture for his purpose.
Merchant of Venice.

After leaving the proud mansion of the Duke of Buckingham, Christian, full of the deep and treacherous schemes which he meditated, hastened to the city, where, in a decent inn, kept by a person of his own persuasion, he had been unexpectedly summoned to meet with Ralph Bridgenorth of Moultrassie. He was not disappointed—the Major had arrived that morning, and anxiously expected him. The usual gloom of his countenance was darkened into a yet deeper shade of anxiety, which was scarcely even relieved, while, in answer to his inquiry after his daughter, Christian gave the most favourable account of her

health and spirits, naturally and unaffectedly intermingled with such praises of her beauty and her disposition, as were likely to be most grateful to a father's ear.

But Christian had too much cunning to expatiate on this theme, however soothing. He stopped short exactly at the point where, as an affectionate relative, he might be supposed to have said enough. "The lady," he said, "with whom he had placed Alice, was delighted with her aspect and manners, and undertook to be responsible for her health and happiness. He had not, he said, deserved so little confidence at the hand of his brother, Bridgenorth, as that the Major should, contrary to his purpose, and to the plan which they had adjusted together, have hurried up from the country, as if his own presence were necessary for Alice's protection."

"Brother Christian," said Bridgenorth in reply, "I must see my child—I must see this person with whom she is entrusted."

"To what purpose?" answered Christian. "Have you not often confessed that the over excess of the carnal affection which you have enter-

tained for your daughter, hath been a snare to you?—Have you not, more than once, been on the point of resigning those great designs which should place righteousness as a counsellor beside the throne, because you desired to gratify your daughter's girlish passion for this descendant of your old persecutor—this Julian Peveril?"

"I own it," said Bridgenorth; "and worlds would I have given, and would yet give, to clasp that youth to my bosom, and call him my son. The spirit of his mother looks from his eye, and his stately step is as that of his father, when he daily spoke comfort to me in my distress, and said, 'The child liveth.'"

"But the youth walks," said Christian, "after his own lights, and mistakes the meteor of the marsh for the Polar star. Ralph Bridgenorth, I will speak to thee in friendly sincerity. Thou must not think to serve both the good cause and Baal. Obey, if thou wilt, thine own carnal affections, summon this Julian Peveril to thy house, and let him wed thy daughter—But mark the reception he will meet with from the proud old

knight, whose spirit is now, even now, as little broken with his chains, as after the sword of the Saints had prevailed at Worcester. See thy daughter spurned from his feet like an outcast."

" Christian," said Bridgenorth, interrupting him, " thou doest urge me hard; but thou doest it in love, my brother, and I forgive thee—Alice shall never be spurned.—But this friend of thine —this lady—thou art my child's uncle; and after me, thou art next to her in love and affection—Still, thou art not her father—hast not her father's fears. Art thou sure of the character of this woman to whom my child is entrusted?"

" Am I sure of my own?—Am I sure that my name is Christian, your's Bridgenorth?—Have I not dwelt for many years in this city?—Do I not know this court?—And am I likely to be imposed upon? For I will not think you can fear my imposing upon you."

" Thou art my brother," said Bridgenorth—" the blood and bone of my departed Saint—and I am determined that I will trust thee in this matter."

" Thou doest well," said Christian; " and who

knows what reward may be in store for thee?—I cannot look upon Alice, but it is strongly borne in on my mind, that there will be work for a creature so excellent beyond ordinary women. Courageous Judith freed Bethulia by her valour, and the comely features of Esther made her a safeguard and a defence to her people in the land of captivity, when she found favour in the sight of King Ahasuerus."

"Be it with her as heaven wills," said Bridgenorth; "and now tell me what progress there is in the great work."

"The people are weary of the iniquity of this court," said Christian; "and if this man will continue to reign, it must be by calling to his councils men of another stamp. The alarm excited by the damnable practices of the Papists, has called up men's souls, and awakened their eyes, to the dangers of their state. He himself—for he will give up both brother and wife to save himself—is not averse to a change of measures; and though we cannot at first see the court purged as with a winnowing fan, yet there will be enough of the good to control the bad—enough

of the sober party to compel the grant of that universal toleration, for which we have sighed so long, as a maiden for her beloved. Time and opportunity will lead the way to more thorough reformation ; and that will be done without stroke of sword, which our friends failed to establish on a sure foundation, even when their victorious blades were in their hands."

"May God grant it !" said Bridgenorth ; "for I fear me I should scruple to do aught which should once more unsheathe the civil sword ; but welcome all that comes in a peaceful and parliamentary way."

"Ay," said Christian, "and which will bring with it the bitter amends, which our enemies have so long merited at our hands. How long hath our brother's blood cried for vengeance from the altar !—Now shall that cruel Frenchwoman find that neither lapse of years, nor her powerful friends, nor the name of Stanley, nor the sovereignty of Man, shall stop the stern course of the pursuer of blood. Her name shall be struck from the noble, and her heritage shall another take."

"Nay, but brother Christian," said Bridge-

north, " art thou not over eager in pursuing this thing ?—It is thy duty as a christian to forgive thine enemies."

" Ay, but not the enemies of Heaven—not those who shed the blood of the saints," said Christian, his eyes kindling with that vehement and fiery expression which at times gave to his uninteresting countenance the only character of passion which it ever exhibited. " No, Bridgenorth," he continued, " I esteem this purpose of revenge holy—I account it a propitiatory sacrifice for what may have been evil in my life. I have submitted to be spurned by the haughty—I have humbled myself to be as a servant; but in my breast was the proud thought, I who do this—do it that I may avenge my brother's blood."

" Still, my brother," said Bridgenorth, " although I participate thy purpose, and have aided thee against this Moabitish woman, I cannot but think thy revenge is more after the law of Moses than after the law of love."

" This comes well from thee, Ralph Bridgenorth," answered Christian; " from thee, who

hast just smiled over the downfall of thine own enemy."

"If you mean Sir Geoffrey Peveril," said Bridgenorth, "I smile not on his ruin. It is well he is abased; but if it lies with me, I may humble his pride, but will never ruin his house."

"You know your purpose best," said Christian; "and I do justice, brother Bridgenorth, to the purity of your principles; but men who see with but worldly eyes, would discern little purpose of mercy in the strict magistrate and severe creditor—and such have you been to Peveril."

"And, brother Christian," said Bridgenorth, his colour rising as he spoke, "neither do I doubt your purpose, nor deny the surprising address with which you have procured such perfect information concerning the purposes of yonder woman of Ammon. But it is free to me to think, that in your intercourse with the court, and with courtiers, you may, in your carnal and worldly policy, sink the value of those spiritual gifts, for which you were once so much celebrated among the brethren."

"Do not apprehend it," said Christian, recovering his temper, which had been a little ruffled by the previous discussion. "Let us but work together as heretofore; and I trust each of us shall be found doing the work of a faithful servant to that old cause for which we have heretofore drawn the sword."

So saying, he took his hat, and bidding Bridgenorth farewell, declared his intention of returning in the evening.

"Fare thee well!" said Bridgenorth; "to that cause wilt thou find me ever a true and devoted adherent. I will act by that counsel of thine, and will not even ask thee—though it may grieve my heart as a parent—with whom, or where, thou hast intrusted my child. I will try to cut off, and cast from me, even my right hand, and my right eye; but for thee, Christian, if thou doest deal otherwise than prudently and honestly in this matter, it is what God and man will require at thy hand."

"Fear not me," said Christian, hastily, and left the place, agitated by reflections of no pleasant kind.

"I ought to have persuaded him to return," he said, as he stepped out into the street. "Even his hovering in this neighbourhood may spoil the plan on which depends the rise of my fortunes—ay, and of his child's. Will men say I have ruined her, when I shall have raised her to the dazzling height of the Duchess of Portsmouth, and perhaps made her mother to a long line of princes? Chiffinch hath vouched for opportunity; and the voluptuary's fortune depends on his gratifying the taste of his master for variety. If she makes an impression, it must be a deep one; and once seated in his affections, I fear not her being supplanted.—What will her father say? Will he, like a prudent man, put his shame in his pocket, because it is well gilded? or will he think it fitting to make a display of moral wrath and parental frenzy? I fear the latter—He has ever kept too strict a course to admit his conniving at such license. But what will his anger avail?—I need not be seen in the matter—those who are, will care little for the resentment of a country Puritan. And after all, what I am la-

bouring to bring about is best for himself, the wench, and above all, for me, Edward Christian."

With such base opiates did this unhappy wretch stifle his own conscience, while anticipating the disgrace of his friend's family, and the ruin of a near relative, committed in confidence to his charge. The character of this man was of no common description; nor was it by an ordinary road that he had arrived at the present climax of unfeeling and infamous selfishness.

Edward Christian, as the reader is aware, was the brother of that William Christian, who was the principal instrument of delivering up the Island of Man to the Republic, and who became the victim of the Countess of Derby's revenge on that account. Both had been educated as Puritans, but William was a soldier, which somewhat modified the strictness of his religious opinions; Edward, a civilian, seemed to entertain these principles in the utmost rigour. But it was only seeming. The exactness of deportment, which procured him great honour and influence among the *sober party*, as they were wont to

term themselves, covered a voluptuous disposition, the gratification of which was sweet to him as stolen waters, and pleasant as bread eaten in secret. While, therefore, his seeming godliness brought him worldly gain, his secret pleasures compensated for his outward austerity; until the Restoration, and the Countess's violent proceedings against his brother, interrupted the course of both. He then fled from his native Island, burning with the desire of revenging his brother's death—the only passion foreign to his own gratification which he was ever known to cherish, and which was also at least partly selfish, since it concerned the restoration of his own fortunes.

He found easy access to Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, who, in right of his Duchess, made great claims to such of the Derby estate as had been bestowed by the Parliament on his celebrated father-in-law. His influence at the court of Charles, where a jest was a better plea than a long claim of faithful service, was so successfully exerted, as to contribute greatly to the depression of that loyal and ill rewarded family. But Buckingham was incapable, even for his own

interest, of pursuing the steady course which Christian suggested to him; and his vacillation probably saved the remnant of the large estates of the Earl of Derby.

Meantime Christian was too useful a follower to be disbanded. From Buckingham, and others of that stamp, he did not affect to conceal the laxity of his morals; but towards the numerous and powerful party to which he belonged, he was able to disguise them by a seeming gravity of exterior, which he never laid aside. Indeed, so wide and absolute was then the distinction betwixt the court and the city, that a man might have for some time played two several parts, as in two different spheres, without its being discovered in the one, that he exhibited himself in a different light in the other. Besides, when a man of talents shews himself an able and useful partizan, his party will continue to protect and accredit him, in spite of conduct the most contradictory to their own principles. Some facts are, in such cases, denied—some are glozed over—and party-zeal is permitted to cover at least as many defects as ever doth charity.

Edward Christian had often need of the partial indulgence of his friends; but he experienced it, for he was eminently useful. Buckingham, and other courtiers of the same class, however dissolute in their lives, were desirous of keeping some connection with the Dissenting or Puritanic party, as it was termed; thereby to strengthen themselves against their opponents at court. In such intrigues, Christian was a notable agent; and at one time had nearly procured an absolute union between a class which professed the most rigid principles of religion and morality, with the latitudinarian courtiers, who set all principle at defiance.

Amidst the vicissitudes of a life of intrigue, during which Buckingham's ambitious schemes and his own repeatedly sent him across the Atlantic, it was Edward Christian's boast that he never lost sight of his principal object—revenge on the Countess of Derby. He maintained a close and intimate correspondence with his native island, so as to be perfectly informed of whatever took place there; and he stimulated, on every favourable opportunity, the cupidity of Bucking-

ham to possess himself of this petty kingdom, by procuring the forfeiture of its present Lord. It was not difficult to keep his patron's wild wishes alive on this topic, for his own mercurial imagination attached particular charms to the idea of becoming a sort of sovereign even in this little island; and he was, like Catiline, as covetous of the property of others, as he was profuse of his own.

But it was not until the pretended discovery of the Papist Plot that the schemes of Christian could be brought to ripen; and then, so odious were the Catholics in the eyes of the credulous people of England, that upon the accusation of the most infamous of mankind, common informers, the scourings of jails, and the refuse of the whipping-post, the most atrocious accusations against persons of the highest rank and fairest character, were readily received and credited.

This was a period which Christian did not fail to improve. He drew close his intimacy with Bridgenorth, which had indeed never been interrupted, and readily engaged him in his schemes, which, in the eyes of his brother-in-law, were

alike honourable and patriotic. But while he flattered Bridgenorth with the achieving a complete reformation in the state—checking the profligacy of the court—relieving the consciences of the Dissenters from the pressure of the penal laws——amending, in fine, the crying grievances of the time—while he shewed him also in prospect revenge upon the Countess of Derby, and a humbling dispensation on the House of Peveril, from whom Bridgenorth had suffered such indignity, Christian did not neglect, in the meanwhile, to consider how he could best benefit himself by the confidence reposed in him by his unsuspicious relation.

The extreme beauty of Alice Bridgenorth—the great wealth which time and economy had accumulated on her father—pointed her out as a most desirable match to repair the wasted fortunes of some of the followers of the court; and he flattered himself that he could conduct such a negociation so as to be in a high degree conducive to his own advantage. He found there would be little difficulty in prevailing on Major Bridge-

north to intrust him with the guardianship of his daughter. That unfortunate gentleman had accustomed himself, from the very period of her birth, to regard the presence of his child as a worldly indulgence too great to be allowed to him; and Christian had little trouble in convincing him that the strong inclination which he felt to bestow her on Julian Peveril, providing he could be brought over to his own political opinions, was a blameable compromise with his more severe principles. Late circumstances had taught him the incapacity and unfitness of Dame Debbitch for the sole charge of so dear a pledge; and he readily and thankfully embraced the kind offer of her maternal uncle, Christian, to place Alice under the protection of a lady of rank in London, whilst he himself was to be engaged in the scenes of bustle and blood, which, in common with all good Protestants, he expected was speedily to take place on a general rising of the Papists, unless prevented by the active and energetic measures of the good people of England. He even confessed his fears, that his partial regard for Alice's happiness might enervate his efforts in be-

half of his country; and Christian had little trouble in eliciting from him a promise, that he would forbear to inquire after her for some time.

Thus certain of being the temporary guardian of his niece for a space long enough, he flattered himself, for the execution of his purpose, Christian endeavoured to pave the way by consulting with Chiffinch, whose known skill in court policy qualified him best as an adviser on this occasion. But this worthy person, being in fact a purveyor for his Majesty's pleasures, and on that account high in his good graces, thought it fell within the line of his duty to suggest another scheme than that on which Christian consulted him. A woman of such exquisite beauty as Alice was described, he deemed more worthy to be a partaker of the affections of the merry Monarch, whose taste in female beauty was so exquisite, than to be made the wife of some worn-out prodigal of quality. And then, doing perfect justice to his own character, he felt it would not be one whit impaired, while his fortune would be, in every respect, greatly amended, if, after sharing the short reign of the Gwyns, the Davis's, the Roberts', and so

forth, Alice Bridgenorth should retire from the state of a royal favourite, into the humble condition of Mrs Chiffinch.

After cautiously sounding Christian, and finding that the near prospect of interest to himself effectually prevented his starting at this iniquitous scheme, Chiffinch detailed it to him fully, carefully keeping the final termination out of sight, and talking of the favour to be acquired by the fair Alice as no passing caprice, but the commencement of a reign as long and absolute as that of the Duchess of Portsmouth, with whose avarice and domineering temper Charles was now understood to be much tired, though the force of habit rendered him unequal to free himself of her yoke.

Thus chalked out, the scene prepared was no longer the intrigue of a court-pander, and a villainous resolution for the ruin of an innocent girl, but became a state intrigue, for the removal of an obnoxious favourite, and the subsequent change of the King's sentiments upon various material points, in which he was at present influenced by the Duchess of Portsmouth. In this light it was exhibited to the Duke of Buckingham, who,

either to sustain his character for daring gallantry, or in order to gratify some capricious fancy, had at one time made love to the reigning favourite, and experienced a repulse which he had never forgiven.

But one scheme was too little to occupy the active and enterprizing spirit of the Duke. An appendix of the Popish Plot was easily so contrived as to involve the Countess of Derby, who, from character and religion, was precisely the person whom the credulous part of the public were disposed to suppose the likely accomplice of such a conspiracy. Christian and Bridgenorth undertook the perilous commission of attaching her even in her own little kingdom of Man, and had commissions for this purpose, which were only to be produced in case of their scheme taking effect.

It miscarried, as the reader is aware, from the Countess's alert preparations for defence; and neither Christian nor Bridgenorth held it sound policy to practise openly, even under parliamentary authority, against a lady so little liable to hesitate upon the measures most likely to secure her feudal sovereignty; wisely considering, that

even the omnipotence, as it has been somewhat too largely styled, of Parliament, might fail to relieve them from the personal consequences of a failure.

On the continent of Britain, however, no opposition was to be feared; and so well was Christian acquainted with all the motions in the interior of the Countess's little court or household, that Peveril would have been arrested the instant he set foot on shore, but for the gale of wind, which obliged the vessel, where he was a passenger, to run for Liverpool. Here Christian, under the name of Ganlesse, unexpectedly met with him, and preserved him from the fangs of the well-breathed witnesses of the Plot, with the purpose of securing his dispatches, or, if necessary, his person also, in such manner as to place him at his own discretion—a narrow and perilous game, which he thought it better, however, to undertake, than to permit these subordinate agents, who were always ready to mutiny against all in league with them, to obtain the credit which they must have done by the seizure of the Countess of Derby's dispatches. It was besides essential to Buck-

ingham's schemes that these should not pass into the hands of a public officer like Topham, who, however pompous and stupid, was upright and well-intentioned, until they had undergone the revisal of a private committee, where something might have probably been suppressed, even supposing that nothing had been added. In short, Christian, in carrying on his own separate and peculiar intrigue, by the agency of the Great Popish Plot, as it was called, acted just like an engineer, who derives the principle of motion which turns his machinery, from the steam-engine, or large water-wheel, constructed to drive a separate and larger engine. Accordingly, he was determined, that while he took all the advantage he could from their supposed discoveries, no one should be admitted to tamper or interfere with his own plans of profit and revenge.

Chiffinch, who, desirous of satisfying himself with his own eyes of that excellent beauty which had been so highly extolled, had gone down to Derbyshire on purpose, was infinitely delighted, when, during the course of a two hours' sermon at the dissenting chapel in Liverpool, which af-

forded him ample leisure for a deliberate survey, he arrived at the conclusion that he had never seen a form or face more captivating. His eyes having confirmed what was told him, he hurried back to the little inn which formed their place of rendezvous, and there awaited Christian and his niece, with a degree of confidence in the success of their project which he had not before entertained ; and with an apparatus of luxury, calculated, as he thought, to make a favourable impression on the mind of a rustic girl. He was somewhat surprised, when, instead of Alice Bridgenorth, to whom he expected that night to have been introduced, he found that Christian was accompanied by Julian Peveril. It was indeed a severe disappointment, for he had prevailed on his own indolence to venture thus far from the court, in order that he might judge, with his own paramount taste, whether Alice was really the prodigy which her uncle's praises had bespoken her, and, as such, a victim worthy of the fate to which she was destined.

A few words betwixt the worthy confederates

determined them on the plan of stripping Peveril of the Countess's dispatches ; Chiffinch absolutely refusing to take any share in arresting him, as a matter of which his master's approbation might be very uncertain.

Christian had also his own reasons for abstaining from so decisive a step. It was by no means like to be agreeable to Bridgenorth, whom it was necessary to keep in good humour ;—it was not necessary, for the Countess's dispatches were of far more importance than the person of Julian. Lastly, it was superfluous in this respect also, that Julian was on his road to his father's castle, where it was likely he would be seized, as a matter of course, along with the other suspicious persons who fell under Topham's warrant, and the denunciations of his infamous companions. He therefore, far from using any violence to Peveril, assumed towards him such a friendly tone, as might seem to warn him against receiving damage from others, and vindicate himself from having had any share in depriving him of his charge. This last manœuvre was achieved by an infusion of a

strong narcotic into Julian's wine; under the influence of which, he slumbered so soundly, that the confederates were easily able to accomplish their inhospitable purpose.

The events of the succeeding days are already known to the reader. Chiffinch set forward to return to London with the packet, which it was desirable should be in Buckingham's hands as soon as possible; while Christian went to Moultrassie, to receive Alice from her father, and convey her safely to London—his accomplice agreeing to defer his curiosity to see her until they should be arrived in that city.

Before parting with Bridgenorth, Christian had exerted his utmost address to prevail on him to remain at Moultrassie: he had even outstepped the bounds of prudence, and, by his urgency, awakened some suspicions of an indefinite nature, which he found it difficult to lay to rest again. Bridgenorth, therefore, followed his brother-in-law to London; and the reader has already been made privy to the arts which Christian used to prevent his further interference with the desti-

nies of his daughter, or the unhallowed schemes of her ill-chosen guardian. Still the latter, as he strode along the street in profound reflection, saw that his undertaking was attended with a thousand perils; and the drops stood like beads on his brow when he thought of the presumptuous levity and fickle temper of Buckingham—the frivolity and intemperance of Chiffinch—the suspicions of the melancholy and bigotted, yet sagacious and honest Bridgenorth. "Had I," he thought, "but tools fitted, each to their portion of the work, how easily could I heave asunder and disjoint the strength that opposes me; but with these frail and insufficient implements, I am in daily, hourly, momentary danger, that one lever or other gives way, and that the whole ruin recoils on my own head. And yet were it not for those failings I complain of, how were it possible for me to have acquired that power over them all which constitutes them my passive tools, even when they seem most to exert their own free will? Yes, the bigots have some right when they affirm that all is for the best."

It may seem strange, that amidst the various subjects of Christian's apprehension, he was never visited by any long or permanent doubt that the virtue of his niece might prove the shoal on which his voyage should be wrecked. But he was an arrant rogue, as well as a hardened libertine; and, in both characters, a professed disbeliever in the virtue of the fair sex.

CHAPTER VII.

As for John Dryden's Charles, I own that King
Was never any very mighty thing;
And yet he was a devilish honest fellow—
Enjoy'd his friend and bottle, and got mellow.

Dr Wolcot.

London, the grand central point of intrigues of every description, had now attracted within its dark and shadowy region the greater number of the personages whom we have had occasion to mention.

Julian Peveril, amongst others of the dramatis personæ, had arrived, and taken up his abode in a remote inn in the suburbs. His business, he conceived, was to remain incognito until he should have communicated in private with the friends who were most like to lend assistance to his parents, as well as to his patroness, in their present situation of doubt and danger. Amongst

these, the most powerful was the Duke of Ormond, whose faithful services, high rank, and acknowledged worth and virtue, still preserved an ascendancy in that very court, where, in general, he was regarded as out of favour. Indeed, so much consciousness did Charles display in his demeanour towards this celebrated noble, and servant of his father, that Buckingham once took the freedom to ask the King whether the Duke of Ormond had lost his Majesty's favour, or his Majesty the Duke's? since, whenever they chanced to meet, the King appeared the most embarrassed of the two. But it was not Peveril's good fortune to obtain the advice or countenance of this distinguished person. His grace of Ormond was not at that time in London.

The letter, about the delivery of which the Countess had seemed most anxious after that to the Duke of Ormond, was addressed to Captain Barstow, (a Jesuit, whose real name was Fenwicke,) to be found, or at least to be heard of, in the house of one Martin Christal in the Savoy. To this place hastened Peveril, upon

learning the absence of the Duke of Ormond. He was not ignorant of the danger which he personally incurred, by thus becoming a medium of communication betwixt a Popish priest and a suspected Catholic. But when he undertook the perilous commission of his patroness, he had done so frankly, and with the unreserved resolution of serving her in the manner in which she most desired her affairs to be conducted. Yet he could not forbear some secret apprehension, when he felt himself engaged in the labyrinth of passages and galleries which led to different obscure sets of apartments in the ancient building termed the Savoy.

This antiquated and almost ruinous pile occupied a part of the site of the public offices in the Strand, commonly called Somerset-House. The Savoy had been formerly a palace, and took its name from an Earl of Savoy, by whom it was founded. It had been the habitation of John of Gaunt, and various persons of distinction—had become a convent, an hospital, and finally, in Charles II.'s time, a waste of dilapidated build-

ings and ruinous apartments, inhabited chiefly by those who had some connection with, or dependence upon, the neighbouring palace of Somerset-House, which, more fortunate than the Savoy, had still retained its royal title, and was the abode of a part of the court, and occasionally of the King himself, who had apartments there.

It was not without several inquiries, and more than one mistake, that, at the end of a long and dusky passage, composed of boards so wasted by time that they threatened to give way under his feet, Julian at length found the name of Martin Christal, broker and appraiser, upon a shattered door. He was about to knock, when some one pulled his cloak ; and looking round, to his great astonishment, which indeed almost amounted to fear, he saw the little mute damsel, who had accompanied him for a part of the way on his voyage from the Isle of Man. "Fenella !" he exclaimed, forgetting that she could neither hear nor reply, "Fenella ! Can this be you ?"

Fenella, assuming the air of warning and authority, which she had heretofore endeavoured to adopt towards him, interposed betwixt Julian and

the door at which he was about to knock—pointed with her finger towards it in a prohibiting manner, and at the same time bent her brows, and shook her head sternly.

After a moment's consideration, Julian could place but one interpretation upon Fenella's appearance and conduct, and that was, by supposing her lady had come up to London, and had dispatched this mute attendant, as a confidential person, to apprize him of some change of her intended operations, which might render the delivery of her letters to Barstow, *alias* Fenwicke, superfluous, or perhaps dangerous. He made signs to Fenella, demanding to know whether she had any commission from the Countess. She nodded. "Had she any letter?" he continued, by the same mode of inquiry. She shook her head impatiently, and, walking hastily along the passage, made a signal to him to follow. He did so, having little doubt that he was about to be conducted into the Countess's presence; but his surprise, at first excited by Fenella's appearance, was increased by the rapidity and ease with which she seemed to track the dusty and decayed mazes of the dila-

pidated Savoy, equal to that with which he had seen her formerly lead the way through the gloomy vaults of Castle Rushin, in the Isle of Man.

When he recollected, however, that Fenella had accompanied the Countess on a long visit to London, it appeared not improbable that she might then have acquired this local knowledge which seemed so accurate. Many foreigners, dependent on the Queen or Queen Dowager, had apartments in the Savoy. Many Catholic priests also found refuge in its recesses, under various disguises, and in defiance of the severity of the laws against Popery. What was more likely, than that the Countess of Derby, a Catholic and a Frenchwoman, should have had secret commissions amongst such people; and that the execution of such should be entrusted, at least occasionally, to Fenella?

Thus reflecting, Julian continued to follow her light and active footsteps as she glided from the Strand to Spring-Garden, and thence into the Park.

It was still early in the morning, and the Mall

was untenanted, save by a few walkers, who frequented these shades for the wholesome purposes of air and exercise. Splendour, gaiety, and display, did not come forth, at that period, until noon was approaching. All readers have heard that the whole space where the Horse Guards are now built, made, in the time of Charles II., a part of St James's Park; and that the old building, now called the Treasury, was a part of the ancient Palace of Whitehall, which was thus immediately connected with the Park. The canal had been constructed, by the celebrated Le Notre, for the purpose of draining the Park; and it communicated with the Thames by a decoy, stocked with a quantity of the rarer water-fowl. It was towards this decoy that Fenella bent her way with unabated speed; and they were approaching a group of two or three gentlemen who sauntered by its banks, when, on looking closely at him who appeared to be the chief of the party, Julian felt his heart beat uncommonly thick, as if conscious of approaching some one of the highest consequence.

The person whom he looked upon was past the

middle age of life, of a dark complexion, corresponding with the long, black, full-bottomed periwig, which he wore instead of his own hair. His dress was plain black velvet, with a diamond star, however, on his cloak, which hung carelessly over one shoulder. His features, strongly lined, even to harshness, had yet an expression of dignified good humour; he was well and strongly built, walked upright and yet easily, and had upon the whole the air of a person of the highest consideration. He kept rather in advance of his companions, but turned and spoke to them, from time to time, with much affability, and probably with some liveliness, judging by the smiles, and sometimes the scarce restrained laughter, by which some of his sallies were received by his attendants. They also wore only morning dresses; but their looks and manner were those of men of rank, in presence of one in station still more elevated. They shared the attention of their principal in common with seven or eight little black curl-haired spaniels, or rather, as they are now called, cockers, which attended their master as closely, and perhaps with as deep sentiments of attach-

ment, as the bipeds of the group; and whose gambols, which seemed to afford him much amusement, he sometimes regulated, and sometimes encouraged. In addition to this pastime, a lacquey, or groom, was also in attendance, with one or two little baskets and bags, from which the gentleman we have described took, from time to time, a handful of seeds, and amused himself with throwing them to the water-fowl.

This, the King's favourite occupation, together with his remarkable countenance, and the deportment of the rest of the company towards him, satisfied Julian Peveril that he was approaching, perhaps indecorously, near the person of Charles Stuart, the second of that unhappy name.

While he hesitated to follow his dumb guide any nearer, and felt the embarrassment of being unable to communicate to her his repugnance to further intrusion, a person in the royal retinue touched a light and lively air on the flageolet, at a signal from the King, who desired to have some tune repeated which had struck him in the theatre on the preceding evening. While the good-natured Monarch marked time with his foot,

and with the motion of his hand, Fenella continued to approach him, and threw into her manner the appearance of one who was attracted, as it were in spite of herself, by the sounds of the instrument.

Anxious to know how this was to end, and astonished to see the dumb girl imitate so accurately the manner of one who actually heard the musical notes, Peveril also drew near, though at somewhat greater distance.

The King looked good-humouredly at both, as if he admitted their musical enthusiasm as an excuse for their intrusion; but his eyes became rivetted on Fenella, whose face and appearance, although rather singular than beautiful, had something in them wild, fantastic, and, as being even captivating, to an eye which had been gratified perhaps to satiety with the ordinary forms of female beauty. She did not appear to notice how closely she was observed; but as if acting under an irresistible impulse, derived from the sounds to which she seemed to listen, she undid the bodkin round which her long tresses were

winded, and flinging them suddenly over her slender person, as if using them as a natural veil, she began to dance with infinite grace and agility, to the tune which the flageolet played.

Peveril lost almost his sense of the King's presence, when he observed with what wonderful grace and agility Fenella kept time to notes, which could only be known to her by the motions of the musician's fingers. He had heard, indeed, among other prodigies, of a person in Fenella's unhappy situation acquiring, by some unaccountable and mysterious tact, the power of acting as an instrumental musician, nay, becoming so accurate a performer as to be capable of leading a musical band; and he had also heard of deaf and dumb persons dancing with sufficient accuracy, by observing the motions of their partner. But Fenella's performance seemed more wonderful than either, since the musician was guided by his written notes, and the dancer by the motions of the others; whereas Fenella had no intimation, save what she seemed to gather with infinite accuracy, by observing the motion of the artist's fingers on his small instrument.

As for the King, who was ignorant of the particular circumstances which rendered Fenella's performance almost marvellous, he was contented, at her first commencement, to authorize what seemed to him the frolic of this singular-looking damsel, by a good-humoured smile; but when he perceived the exquisite truth and justice, as well as the wonderful combination of grace and agility, with which she executed to his favourite air a dance which was perfectly new to him, Charles turned his mere acquiescence into something like enthusiastic applause. He bore time to her motions with the movement of his foot—applauded with head and with hand—and seemed, like herself, carried away by the enthusiasm of the gestic art.

After a rapid yet graceful succession of *entrechats*, Fenella introduced a slow movement, which terminated the dance; then dropping a profound curtesy, she continued to stand motionless before the King, her arms folded on her bosom, her head stooped, and her eyes cast down, after the manner of an oriental slave; while through the misty veil of her shadowy locks it might be ob-

served, that the colour which exercise had called to her cheeks was dying fast away, and resigning them to their native dusky hue.

"By my honour," exclaimed the King, "she is like a fairy who trips it in moonlight. There must be more of air and fire than of earth in her composition. It is well poor Nelly Gwyn saw her not, or she would have died of grief and envy.—Come, gentlemen, which of you contrived this pretty piece of morning pastime?"

The courtiers looked at each other, but none of them felt authorized to claim the merit of a service so agreeable.

"We must ask the quick-eyed nymph herself then," said the King; and, looking at Fenella, he added, "Tell us, my pretty one, to whom we owe the pleasure of seeing you?—I suspect the Duke of Buckingham; for this is exactly a *tour de son metier*."

Fenella, on observing that the King addressed her, bowed low, and shook her head, in signal that she did not understand what he said. "Odds-fish, that is true," said the King; "she must perforce be a foreigner—her complexion and agility

speak it. France or Italy has had the moulding of these elastic limbs, dark cheek, and eye of fire." He then put to her in French, and again in Italian, the question, "By whom she had been sent hither?"

At the second repetition, Fenella threw back her veiling tresses, so as to shew the melancholy which sat on her brow; while she sadly shook her head, and intimated by imperfect muttering, but of the softest and most plaintive kind, her organic deficiency.

"Is it possible Nature can have made such a fault?" said Charles. "Can she have left so curious a piece as thou art without the melody of voice, whilst she has made thee so exquisitely sensible to the beauty of sound?—Stay; what means this? and what young fellow are you bringing up there? Oh, the master of the show, I suppose.—Friend," he added, addressing himself to Peveril, who, on the signal of Fenella, stepped forward almost instinctively, and kneeled down, "we thank thee for the pleasure of this morning.—My Lord Marquis, you rooked me

at piquet last night; for which disloyal deed thou shalt now atone, by giving a couple of pieces to this honest youth, and five to the girl."

As the nobleman drew out his purse, and came forward to perform the King's generous commission, Julian felt some embarrassment ere he was able to explain, that he had no title to be benefitted by the young person's performance, and that his Majesty had mistaken his character.

"And who art thou then, my friend?" said Charles; "but above all, and particularly, who is this dancing nymph, whom thou standest waiting on like an attendant fawn?"

"The young person is a retainer of the Countess-Dowager of Derby, so please your Majesty," said Peveril, in a low tone of voice; "and I am——"

"Hold, hold," said the King; "this is a dance to another tune, and not fit for a place so public. Hark thee, friend; do thou and the young woman follow Empson where he will conduct thee.—Empson, carry them—hark in thy ear."

"May it please your Majesty, I ought to say,"

said Peveril, "that I am guiltless of any purpose of intrusion——"

"Now a plague on him who can take no hint," said the King, cutting short his apology. "Odds-fish, man, there are times when civility is the greatest impertinence in the world. Do thou follow Empson, and amuse thyself for an half hour's space with the fairy's company, till we shall send for you."

Charles spoke this not without casting an anxious eye around, and in a tone which intimated apprehension of being overheard. Julian could only bow obedience, and follow Empson, who was the same person who played so rarely on the flageolet.

When they were out of sight of the King and his party, the musician wished to enter into conversation with his companions, and addressed himself first to Fenella, with a broad compliment of, "By the mass, ye dance rarely—ne'er a slut on the boards shews such a shank. I would be content to play to you till my throat were as dry as my whistle. Come, be a little free—old Row-

ley will not quit the park till nine. I will carry you to Spring Gardens, and bestow sweet-cakes and a quart of Rhenish on both of you; and we'll be comeradoes. What the devil, no answer? How's this, brother?—Is this neat wench of your's deaf or dumb, or both? I should laugh at that, and she trip it so well to the flageolet."

To rid himself of this fellow's discourse, Peveril answered him in French, that he was a foreigner, and spoke no English: glad to escape, though at the expense of a fiction, from the additional embarrassment of a fool, who was like to ask more questions than his own wisdom might have enabled him to answer.

"*Etranger*—that means stranger—" muttered their guide; "more French dogs and jades come to lick the good English butter off our bread, or perhaps an Italian puppet-show. Well, if it were not that they have a mortal enmity to the whole *gamut*, this were enough to make any honest fellow turn Puritan. But if I am to play to her at the Duchess's, I'll be d—d but I put her out in the tune, just to teach her to have the impu-

dence to come to England, and to speak no English."

Having muttered to himself this truly British resolution, the musician walked briskly on towards a large house near the bottom of St James's Street, and entered the court, by a grated door, from the Park, of which the mansion commanded an extensive prospect.

Peveril, finding himself in front of a handsome portico, under which opened a stately pair of folding-doors, was about to ascend the steps which led to the main entrance, when his guide seized him by the arm, exclaiming, "Hold, Mounseer. What, you'll lose nothing, I see, for want of courage; but you must keep the back way, for all your fine doublet. Here it is not, knock and it shall be opened; but may be instead, knock and you shall be knocked."

Suffering himself to be guided by Empson, Julian deviated from the principal door, to one which opened, with less ostentation, in an angle of the court-yard. On a modest tap from the flute-player, admittance was afforded him and his companions by a footman, who conducted them

through a variety of stone passages, to a very handsome summer parlour, where a lady, or something resembling one, dressed in a style of extra elegance, was trifling with a play-book while she finished her chocolate. There is scarce any describing her, but by weighing her natural good qualities against the affectations which counterbalanced them. She would have been handsome, but for rouge and *minanderie*—would have been civil, but for overstrained airs of patronage and condescension—would have had an agreeable voice, had she spoke in her natural tone—and fine eyes, had she not made such desperate hard use of them. She could only spoil a pretty ancle by too liberal display; but her shape, though she could not yet be thirty years old, had the embonpoint which might have suited better with ten years more advanced. She pointed Empson to a seat with the air of a Duchess, and asked him, languidly, how he did this age, that she had not seen him? and what folks these were he had brought with him?

"Foreigners, madam; d—d foreigners," answered Empson; "starving beggars, that our old friend has picked up in the Park this morning—

the wench dances, and the fellow plays on the Jew's trump, I believe. On my life, madam, I begin to be ashamed of old Rowley; I must discard him, unless he keeps better company in future."

"Fie, Empson," said the lady; "consider it is our duty to countenance him, and keep him afloat; and indeed I always make a principle of it. Hark ye, he comes not hither this morning?"

"He will be here," answered Empson, "in the walking of a minuet."

"My God!" exclaimed the lady, with unaffected alarm; and starting up with utter neglect of her usual airs of graceful languor, she tripped as swiftly as a milk-maid into an adjoining apartment, where they heard presently a few words of eager and animated discussion.

"Something to be put out of the way, I suppose," said Empson. "Well for madam I gave her the hint. There he goes, the happy swain."

Julian was so situated, that he could, from the same casement through which Empson was peeping, observe a man in a laced roquelaure, and carrying his rapier under his arm, glide from the door by which he had himself entered, and out

of the court, keeping as much as possible under the shade of the buildings.

The lady re-entered at this moment, and observing how Empson's eyes were directed, said, with a slight appearance of hurry, " A gentleman of the Duchess of Portsmouth's with a billet; and so tiresomely pressing for an answer, that I was obliged to write without my diamond pen. I have daubed my fingers, I dare say," she added, looking at a very pretty hand, and presently after dipping her fingers in a little silver vase of rose-water. " But that little exotic monster of yours, Empson, I hope she really understands no English?—On my life she coloured.—Is she such a rare dancer?—I must see her dance, and hear him play on the Jew's harp."

"Dance!" replied Empson; " she danced well enough when *I* played to her. I can make any thing dance. Old Counsellor Clubfoot danced when he had a fit of the gout; you have seen no such pas seul in the theatre. I would engage to make the Archbishop of Canterbury dance the hays like a Frenchman. There is nothing in dancing; it all lies in the music. Rowley does not know

that now. He saw this poor wench dance; and thought so much on't, when it was all along of me. I would have defied her to sit still. And Rowley gives her the credit of it, and five pieces to boot; and I have only two for my morning work!"

"True, Master Empson," said the lady; "but you are of the family, though in a lower station; and you ought to consider——"

"By G—, madam," answered Empson, "all I consider is, that I play the best flageolet in England; and that they can no more supply my place, if they were to discard me, than they could fill Thames from Fleet-Ditch."

"Well, Master Empson, I do not dispute but you are a man of talents," replied the lady; "still I say, mind the main chance—you please the ear to-day—another has the advantage of you to-morrow."

"Never, mistress, while ears have the heavenly power of distinguishing one note from another."

"Heavenly power, say you, Master Empson?" said the lady.

"Ay, madam, heavenly; for some very neat verses which we had at our festival say,

'What know we of the blest above,
But that they sing and that they love.'

It is Master Waller wrote them, as I think; who, upon my word, ought to be encouraged."

"And so should you, my dear Empson," said the dame, yawning, "were it only for the honour you do to your own profession. But in the meantime, will you ask these people to have some refreshment?—and will you take some yourself?—the chocolate is that which the Ambassador Portuguese fellow brought over to the Queen."

"If it be genuine," said the musician.

"How, sir?" said the fair one, half rising from her pile of cushions—"Not genuine, and in this house!—Let me understand you, Master Empson—I think, when I first saw you, you scarce knew chocolate from coffee."

"By G—, madam," answered the flageolet-player, "you are perfectly right. And how can I shew better how much I have profited by your

ladyship's excellent cheer, except by being critical?"

"You stand excused, Master Empson," said the petit maitresse, sinking gently back on the downy couch, from which a momentary irritation had startled her—"I think the chocolate will please you, though scarce equal to what we had from the Spanish resident Mendoza.—But we must offer these strange people something. Will you ask them if they would have coffee and chocolate, or cold wild-fowl, fruit, and wine? They must be treated, so as to shew them where they are, since here they are."

"Unquestionably, madam," said Empson; "but I have just at this instant forgot the French for chocolate, hot bread, coffee, game, and drinkables."

"It is odd," said the lady; "and I have forgot my French and Italian at the same moment. But it signifies little—I will order the things to be brought, and they will remember the names of them themselves."

Empson laughed loudly at this jest, and pawned his soul that the cold sirloin, which entered im-

mediately after, was the best emblem of roast-beef all the world over. Plentiful refreshments were offered to all the party, of which both Fenella and Peveril partook.

In the meanwhile the flageolet-player drew closer to the side of the lady of the mansion—their intimacy was cemented, and their spirits set afloat, by a glass of liqueur, which gave them additional confidence in discussing the characters, as well of the superior attendants of the court, as of the inferior rank, to which they themselves might be supposed to belong.

The lady, indeed, during this conversation, frequently exerted her complete and absolute superiority over Master Empson; in which that musical gentleman humbly acquiesced whenever the circumstance was recalled to his attention, whether in the way of blunt contradiction, sarcastic insinuation, downright assumption of higher importance, or in any of the other various modes by which such superiority is usually assisted and maintained. But the lady's obvious love of scandal was the lure which very soon brought her again down from the dignified port which for a

moment she assumed, and placed her once more on a gossipping level with her companion.

Their conversation was too trivial, and too much allied to petty court intrigues, with which he was totally unacquainted, to be in the least interesting to Julian. As it continued for more than an hour, he soon ceased to pay the least attention to a conversation consisting of nick-names, patch-work, and inuendo; and employed himself in reflecting on his own complicated affairs, and the probable issue of his approaching audience with the King, which had been brought about by so singular an agent, and by means so unexpected. He often looked to his guide, Fenella; and observed that she was, for the greater part of the time, drowned in deep and abstracted meditation. But three or four times—and it was when the assumed airs and affected importance of the musician and their hostess rose to the most extravagant excess—he observed that Fenella dealt askance on them some of those bitter and almost blighting elfin looks, which in the Isle of Man were held to imply contemptuous execration. There was something in all her manner so extraordinary, join-

ed to her sudden appearance, and her demeanour in the King's presence, so oddly, yet so well contrived to procure him a private audience—which he might, by graver means, have sought in vain—that it almost justified the idea, though he smiled at it internally, that the little mute agent was aided in her machinations by the kindred imps, to whom, according to Manx superstition, her genealogy was to be traced.

Another idea sometimes occurred to Julian, though he rejected the question, as being equally wild with those doubts which referred Fenella to a race different from that of mortals—"Was she really afflicted with those organical imperfections which had always seemed to sever her from humanity?—If not, what could be the motives of so young a creature practising so dreadful a penance for such an unremitted term of years? And how formidable must be the strength of mind which could condemn itself to so terrific a sacrifice—How deep and strong the purpose for which it was undertaken."

But a brief recollection of past events enabled him to dismiss this conjecture as altogether wild

and visionary. He had but to call to memory the various stratagems practised by his light-hearted companion, the young Earl of Derby, upon this forlorn girl—the conversations held in her presence, in which the character of a creature so irritable and sensitive upon all occasions, was freely, and sometimes satirically discussed, without her expressing the least acquaintance with what was going forward, to convince him that so deep a deception could never have been practised for so many years, by a being of a turn of mind so peculiarly jealous and irascible.

He renounced, therefore, the idea, and turned his thoughts to his own affairs, and his approaching interview with his Sovereign; in which meditation we propose to leave him, until we briefly review the changes which had taken place in the situation of Alice Bridgenorth.

CHAPTER VIII.

I fear the devil worst when gown and cassock,
Or, in the lack of them, old Calvin's cloak,
Conceals his cloven hoof.

Anonymous.

JULIAN PEVERIL had scarce set sail for Whitehaven, when Alice Bridgenorth and her gouvernante, at the hasty command of her father, were embarked with equal speed and secrecy on board of a bark bound for Liverpool. Christian accompanied them on their voyage, as the friend to whose guardianship Alice was to be consigned during any future separation from her father, and whose amusing conversation, joined to his pleasing though cold manners, as well as his near relationship, induced Alice, in her forlorn situation, to consider her fate as fortunate in having such a guardian.

At Liverpool, as the reader already knows, Christian took the first overt step in the villainy which he had contrived against the innocent girl, by exposing her at a meeting-house to the unhallowed gaze of Chiffinch, in order to convince him she was possessed of such uncommon beauty as might well deserve the infamous promotion to which they meditated to raise her.

Highly satisfied with her personal appearance, Chiffinch was no less so with the sense and delicacy of her conversation, when he met her in company with her uncle afterwards in London. The simplicity, and at the same time the spirit of her remarks, made him regard her as his scientific attendant the cook might have done a newly invented sauce, sufficiently *piquante* in its qualities to awaken the jaded appetite of a cloyed and gorged epicure. She was, he said and swore, the very corner-stone on which, with proper management, and with his instructions, a few honest fellows might build a court fortune.

That the necessary introduction might take place, the confederates judged fit she should be

put under the charge of an experienced lady, whom some called Mistress Chiffinch, and others Chiffinch's mistress—one of those obliging creatures who are willing to discharge all the duties of a wife, without the inconvenient and indissoluble ceremony.

It was one, and not perhaps the least prejudicial consequence of the licence of that ill-governed time, that the bounds betwixt virtue and vice were so far smoothed down and levelled, that the frail wife, or the tender friend who was no wife, did not necessarily lose their place in society; but, on the contrary, if they moved in the higher circles, were permitted and encouraged to mingle with women whose rank was certain, and whose reputation was untainted.

A regular *liaison*, like that of Chiffinch and his fair one, inferred little scandal; and such was his influence, as prime minister of his master's pleasures, that, as Charles himself expressed it, the lady whom we introduced to our readers in the last chapter, had obtained a brevet commission to rank as a married woman. And to do the gentle dame justice, no wife could have been more attentive to

forward his plans, or more liberal in disposing of his income.

She inhabited a set of apartments called Chiffinch's—the scene of many an intrigue, both of love and politics; and where Charles often held his private parties for the evening, when, as frequently happened, the ill-humour of the Duchess of Portsmouth, his reigning Sultana, prevented his supping with her. The hold which such an arrangement gave a man like Chiffinch, used as he well knew how to use it, made him of too much consequence to be slighted even by the first persons in the state, unless they stood aloof from all manner of politics and court intrigue.

In the charge of Mistress Chiffinch, and of him whose name she bore, Edward Christian placed the daughter of his sister, and of his confiding friend, calmly contemplating her ruin as an event certain to follow; and hoping to ground upon it his own chance of a more assured fortune, than a life spent in intrigue had hitherto been able to procure for him.

The innocent Alice, without being able to dis-

cover any thing wrong either in the scenes of unusual luxury with which she was surrounded, or in the manners of her hostess, which, both from nature and policy, were kind and caressing—felt nevertheless an instinctive apprehension that all was not right—a feeling in the human mind, allied perhaps to that sense of danger which animals exhibit when placed in the vicinity of the natural enemies of their race, and which makes birds cower when the hawk is in the air, and beasts tremble when the tiger is abroad in the desert. There was a heaviness at her heart which she could not dispel; and the few hours which she had already spent at Chiffinch's were like those passed in a prison by one unconscious of the cause or event of his captivity. It was the third morning after her arrival in London, that the scene took place which we now recur to.

The impertinence and vulgarity of Empson, which was permitted to him as an unrivalled performer upon his instrument, were exhausting themselves at the expence of all other musical professors, and Mistress Chiffinch was listening with careless indifference, when some one was heard

speaking loudly, and with animation, in the inner apartment.

"O gemini and gillflower water!" exclaimed the damsel, startled out of her fine airs into her natural vulgarity of exclamation, and running to the door of communication—"if he has not come back again after all!—and if old Rowley——"

A tap at the further and opposite door here arrested her attention—she quitted the handle of that which she was about to open as speedily as if it had burnt her fingers, and, moving back towards her couch, asked, "Who is there?"

"Old Rowley himself, madam," said the King, entering the apartment with his usual air of easy composure.

"O crimini!—your Majesty!—I thought——"

"That I was out of hearing, doubtless," said the King; "and spoke of me as folks speak of absent friends. Make no apology. I think I have heard ladies say of their lace, that a rent is better than a darn.—Nay, be seated.—Where is Chiffinch?"

"He is down at York-House, your Majesty," said the dame, recovering, though with no small

difficulty, the calm affectation of her usual demeanour. "Shall I send your Majesty's commands?"

"I will wait his return," said the King.—"Permit me to taste your chocolate."

"There is some fresh frothed in the office," said the lady; and using a little silver call, or whistle, a black boy, superbly dressed, like an oriental page, with gold bracelets on his naked arms, and a gold collar around his equally bare neck, attended with the favourite beverage of the morning, in an apparatus of the richest china.

While he sipped his cup of chocolate, the King looked round the apartment, and observing Fenella, Peveril, and the musician, who remained standing beside a large Indian screen, he continued, addressing Mistress Chiffinch, though with polite indifference, "I sent you the fiddles this morning—or rather the flute—Empson, and a fairy elf whom I met in the Park, who dances divinely. She has brought us the very newest saraband from the court of Queen Mab, and I sent her here, that you may see it at leisure."

"Your Majesty does me by far too much ho-

nour," said Chiffinch, her eyes properly cast down, and her accents minced into becoming humility.

"Nay, little Chiffinch," answered the King, in a tone of as contemptuous familiarity as was consistent with his good-breeding, "it was not altogether for thine own private ear, though quite deserving of all sweet sounds; but I thought Nelly had been with thee this morning."

"I can send Bajazet for her, your Majesty," answered the lady.

"Nay, I will not trouble your little heathen Sultan to go so far. Still it strikes me that Chiffinch said you had company—some country cousin, or such a matter—Is there not such a person?"

"There is a young person from the country," said Mistress Chiffinch, striving to conceal a considerable portion of embarrassment; "but she is unprepared for such an honour as to be admitted into your Majesty's presence, and——"

"And therefore the fitter to receive it, Chiffinch. There is nothing in nature so beautiful as the first blush of a little rustic between joy and fear, and wonder and curiosity. It is the down

on the peach—pity it decays so soon!—the fruit remains, but the first high colouring and exquisite flavour are gone.—Never put up thy lip for the matter, Chiffinch, for it is as I tell you; so pray let us have *la belle cousine*."

Mistress Chiffinch, more embarrassed than ever, ain advanced towards the door of communication, which she had been in the act of opening when his Majesty entered. But just as she coughed pretty loudly, perhaps as a signal to some one within, voices were again heard in a raised tone of altercation—the door was flung open, and Alice rushed out of the inner apartment, followed to the door of it by the enterprizing Duke of Buckingham, who stood fixed with astonishment on finding his pursuit of the flying fair one had hurried him into the presence of the King.

Alice Bridgenorth appeared too much transported with anger to permit her to pay attention to the rank or character of the company into which she had thus suddenly entered. "I remain no longer here, madam," she said to Mistress Chiffinch, in a tone of uncontrollable resolution; "I leave instantly a house where I am exposed to com-

pany which I detest, and to solicitations which I despise."

The dismayed Mistress Chiffinch could only implore her, in broken whispers, to be silent; adding, while she pointed to Charles, who stood with his eyes fixed rather on his audacious courtier than on the game which he pursued, "The King—the King!"

"If I am in the King's presence," said Alice, aloud, and in the same torrent of passionate feeling, while her eyes sparkled through tears of resentment and insulted modesty, "it is the better—it is his Majesty's duty to protect me; and on his protection I throw myself."

These words, which were spoken aloud, and boldly, at once recalled Julian to himself, who had hitherto stood, as it were, bewildered. He approached Alice, and whispering in her ear that she had beside her one who would defend her with his life, implored her to trust to his guardianship in this emergency.

Clinging to his arm in all the ecstacy of gratitude and joy, the spirit which had so lately invigorated Alice in her own defence, gave way in a

flood of tears, when she saw herself supported by him whom perhaps she most wished to recognize as her protector. She permitted Peveril gently to draw her back towards the screen before which he had been standing; where, holding by his arm, but at the same time endeavouring to conceal herself behind him, they waited the conclusion of a scene so singular.

The King seemed at first so much surprised at the unexpected apparition of the Duke of Buckingham, as to pay little or no attention to Alice, who had been the means of thus unceremoniously introducing his Grace into the presence at a most unsuitable moment. In that intriguing court, it had not been the first time that the Duke had ventured to enter the lists of gallantry in rivalry of his Sovereign, which made the present insult the more intolerable. His purpose of lying concealed in these private apartments was explained by the exclamations of Alice; and Charles, notwithstanding the placidity of his disposition, and his habitual guard over his passions, resented the attempt to seduce his destined mistress, as an Eastern Sultan would have done the

insolence of a vizier, who anticipated his intended purchases of captive beauty in the slave market. The swarthy features of Charles reddened, and the strong lines on his dark visage seemed to become inflated, as he said, in a voice which faultered with passion, " Buckingham, you dared not have thus insulted your equal! To your master you may securely offer any affront, since his rank glues his sword to the scabbard."

The haughty Duke did not brook this taunt unanswered. " My sword," he said, with emphasis, " was never in the scabbard, when your Majesty's service required it should be unsheathed."

" Your Grace means when its service was required for its master's interest," said the King; " for you could only gain the coronet of a Duke by fighting for the royal crown. But it is over —I have treated you as a friend—a companion— almost an equal—you have repaid me with insolence and ingratitude."

" Sire," answered the Duke, firmly, but respectfully, " I am unhappy in your displeasure; yet thus far fortunate, that while your words can confer honour, they cannot impair or take it

away.—It is hard," he added, lowering his voice, so as only to be heard by the King, " that the squall of a peevish wench should cancel the services of so many years."

" It is harder," said the King, in the same subdued tone, which both preserved through the rest of the conversation, " that a wench's bright eyes can make a nobleman forget the decencies due to his Sovereign's privacy."

" May I presume to ask your Majesty what decencies are those ?" said the Duke.

Charles bit his lip to keep himself from smiling. " Buckingham," he said, " this is a foolish business; and we must not forget, (as we have nearly done,) that we have an audience to witness this scene, and should walk the stage with dignity. I will shew you your fault in private."

" It is enough that your Majesty has been displeased, and that I have unhappily been the occasion," said the Duke, kneeling ; " although quite ignorant of any purpose beyond a few words of gallantry ; and I sue thus low for your Majesty's pardon."

So saying, he kneeled gracefully down. " Thou

hast it, George," said the placable Prince. "I believe thou wilt be sooner tired of offending, than I of forgiving."

"Long may your Majesty live to give the offence, with which it is your royal pleasure at present to charge my innocence," said the Duke.

"What mean you by that, my lord?" said Charles, the angry shade returning to his brow for a moment.

"My liege," replied the Duke, "you are too honourable to deny your custom of shooting with Cupid's bird-bolts in other men's warrens. You have ta'en the royal right of free-forestry over every man's park. It is hard that you should be so much displeased at hearing a chance arrow whizz near your own pales."

"No more on't," said the King; "but let us see where the dove has harboured."

"The Helen has found a Paris while we were quarrelling," replied the Duke.

"Rather an Orpheus," said the King; "and what is worse, one that is already provided with an Euridice—She is clinging to the fiddler."

"It is mere fright," said Buckingham, "like Rochester's, when he crept into the bass-viol to hide himself from Sir Dermot O'Cleaver."

"We must make the people shew their talents," said the King, "and stop their mouths with money and civility, or we shall have this foolish encounter over half the town."

The King then approached Julian, and desired him to take his instrument, and cause his female companion to perform a saraband.

"I had already the honour to inform your Majesty," said Julian, "that I cannot contribute to your pleasure in the way you command me; and that this young person is——"

"A retainer of the Lady Powis," said the King, upon whose mind things not connected with his pleasures made a very slight impression. "Poor lady, she is in trouble about the lords in the Tower."

"Pardon me, sir," said Julian, "she is a dependent of the Countess of Derby."

"True, true," answered Charles; "it is indeed of Lady Derby, who hath also her own

distresses in these times. Do you know who taught the young person to dance? Some of her steps mightily resemble Le Jeune's of Paris."

"I presume she was taught abroad, sir,"—said Julian; "for myself, I am charged with some weighty business by the Countess, which I would willingly communicate to your Majesty."

"We will send you to our Secretary of State," said the King. "But this dancing envoy will oblige us once more, will she not?—Empson, now that I remember, it was to your pipe that she danced—Strike up, man, and put mettle into her feet."

Empson began to play a well-known measure; and, as he had threatened, made more than one false note, until the King whose ear was very accurate, rebuked him with, "Sirrah, art thou drunk at this early hour, or must thou too be playing thy slippery tricks with me? Thou thinkest thou art born to beat time, but I will have time beat into thee."

The hint was sufficient, and Empson took good care so to perform his air as to merit his

high and deserved reputation. But on Fenella it made not the slightest impression. She rather leant than stood against the wall of the apartment; her countenance as pale as death, her arms and hands hanging down as if stiffened, and her existence only testified by the sobs which agitated her bosom, and the tears which flowed from her half-closed eyes.

"A plague on it," said the King, "some evil spirit is abroad this morning; and the wenches are all bewitched, I think. Cheer up, my girl. What, in the devil's name, has changed thee at once from a Nymph to a Niobe? If thou standest there longer, thou wilt grow to the very marble wall—Or—oddsfish, George, have you been bird-bolting in this quarter also?"

Ere Buckingham could answer to this charge, Julian again kneeled down to the King, and prayed to be heard, were it only for five minutes. "The young woman," he said, "had been long in attendance on the Countess of Derby. She was bereaved of the faculties of speech and hearing."

"Oddsfish, man, and dances so well?" said the King. "Nay, all Gresham College shall never make me believe that."

"I would have thought it equally impossible, but for what I to-day witnessed," said Julian; "but only permit me, sir, to deliver the petition of my lady the Countess."

"And who art thou thyself, man?" said the Sovereign, "for though every thing which wears boddice and breast-knot has a right to speak to a King, and be answered, I know not that they have a title to audience through an envoy extraordinary."

"I am Julian Peveril of Derbyshire," answered the supplicant, "the son of Sir Geoffrey Peveril of Martindale Castle, who——"

"Body of me—the old Worcester man?" said the King. "Oddsfish, I remember him well—some harm has happened to him, I think—Is he not dead, or very sick at least?"

"Ill at ease, and it please your Majesty, but not ill in health. He has been imprisoned on account of alleged accession to this Plot."

"Look you there," said the King; "I knew

he was in trouble; and yet how to help the stout old Knight, I can hardly tell. I can scarce escape suspicion of the Plot myself, though the principal object of it is to take away my own life. Were I to stir to save a plotter, I should certainly be brought in as an accessory.—Buckingham, thou hast some interest with those who built this fine state engine, or at least who have driven it on—be good natured for once, though it is scarcely thy wont, and interfere to shelter our old Worcester friend, Sir Godfrey. You have not forgot him?"

"No, sir," answered the Duke; "for I never heard the name."

"It is Sir Geoffrey, his Majesty would say," said Julian.

"And if his Majesty *did* say Sir Geoffrey, Master Peveril, I cannot see of what use I can be to your father," replied the Duke, coldly. "He is accused of a heavy crime; and a British subject so accused can have no shelter either from prince or peer, but must stand to the award and deliverance of God and his country."

"Now, Heaven forgive thee thy hypocrisy,

George," said the King, hastily. "I would rather hear the devil preach religion than thee teach patriotism. Thou knowest as well as I, that the nation is in a scarlet fever for fear of the poor Catholics, who are not two men to five hundred; and that the public mind is so harassed with new narrations of conspiracy, and fresh horrors every day, that people have as little real sense of what is just or unjust, as men who talk in their sleep of what is sense or nonsense. I have borne, and borne with it—I have seen blood flow on the scaffold, fearing to thwart the nation in its fury—and I pray to God that I or mine be not called on to answer for it. I will no longer swim with the torrent, which honour and conscience call upon me to stem—I will act the part of a Sovereign, and save my people from doing injustice, even in their own despite."

Charles walked hastily up and down the room as he expressed these unwonted sentiments, with energy equally unwonted. After a momentary pause, the Duke answered him gravely, "Spoken like a Royal King, sir; but—pardon me—not like a King of England."

Charles paused, as the Duke spoke, beside a window which looked full on Whitehall, and his eye was involuntarily attracted by the fatal window of the Banquetting House, out of which his unhappy father was conducted to execution. Charles was naturally, or, more properly, constitutionally, brave; but a life of pleasure, together with the habit of governing his course rather by what was expedient than by what was right, rendered him unapt to dare the same scene of danger or of martyrdom, which had closed his father's life and reign; and the thought came over his half-formed resolution, like the rain upon a kindling beacon. In another man, his perplexity would have seemed almost ludicrous; but Charles could not lose, even under these circumstances, the dignity and grace which were as natural to him as his indifference and his good humour. "Our Council must decide in this matter," he said, looking to the Duke; "and be assured, young man," he added, addressing Julian, "your father will not want an intercessor in his King, so far as the laws will permit my interference in his behalf."

Julian was about to retire, when Fenella, with a marked look, put into his hand a slip of paper, on which she had hastily written, "The packet —give him the packet."

After a moment's hesitation, during which he reflected that Fenella was the organ of the Countess's pleasure, Julian resolved to obey. "Permit me, then, Sire," he said, "to place in your royal hands this packet, intrusted to me by the Countess of Derby. The letters have already been once taken from me; and I have little hope that I can now deliver them as they are addressed. I place them, therefore, in your royal hands, certain that they will evince the innocence of the writer."

The King shook his head, as he took the packet reluctantly. "It is no safe office you have undertaken, young man. A messenger has sometimes his throat cut for the sake of his dispatches—But give them to me; and, Chiffinch, give me wax and a taper." He employed himself in folding the Countess's packet in another envelope. "Buckingham," he said, "you are evidence

that I do not read them till the Council shall see them."

Buckingham approached, and offered his own services in folding the parcel, but Charles rejected his assistance; and, having finished his task, he sealed the packet with his own signet-ring. The Duke bit his lip and retired.

"And now, young man," said the King, "your errand is sped, so far as it can at present be forwarded."

Julian bowed deeply, as to take leave at these words, which he rightly interpreted as a signal for his departure. Alice Bridgenorth still clung to his arm, and motioned to withdraw along with him. The King and Buckingham looked at each other in conscious astonishment, and yet not without a desire to smile, so strange did it seem to them that a prize, for which an instant before they had been mutually contending, should thus glide out of their grasp, or rather be borne off by a third and very inferior competitor.

"Mistress Chiffinch," said the King, with a hesitation which he could not disguise, "I hope your fair charge is not about to leave you?"

"Certainly not, your Majesty," answered Chiffinch. "Alice, my love—you mistake—that opposite door leads to your apartments."

"Pardon me, madam," answered Alice; "I have indeed mistaken my road, but it was when I came hither."

"The errant damozel," said Buckingham, looking at Charles with as much intelligence as etiquette permitted him to throw into his eye, and then turning it towards Alice, as she still held by Julian's arm, "is resolved not to mistake her road a second time. She has chosen a sufficient guide."

"And yet stories tell that such guides have led maidens astray," said the King.

Alice blushed deeply, but instantly recovered her composure so soon as she saw that her liberty was likely to depend upon the immediate exercise of resolution. She quitted, from a sense of insulted delicacy, the arm of Julian, to which she had hitherto clung; but as she spoke, she continued to retain a slight grasp of his cloak. "I have indeed mistaken my way," she repeated, still addressing Mistress Chiffinch, "but it

was when I crossed this threshold. The usage to which I have been exposed in your house, has determined me to quit it instantly."

"I will not permit that, my young mistress," answered Chiffinch, "until your uncle, who placed you under my care, shall relieve me of the charge of you."

"I will answer for my conduct, both to my uncle, and, what is of more importance, to my father," said Alice. "You must permit me to depart, madam; I am free born, and you have no right to detain me."

"Pardon me, my young madam," said Mistress Chiffinch, "I have a right, and I will maintain it too."

"I will know that before quitting this presence," said Alice, firmly; and, advancing a step or two, she dropped on her knee before the King. "Your Majesty," said she, "if indeed I kneel before King Charles, is the father of your subjects."

"Of a good many of them," said the Duke of Buckingham, apart.

"I demand protection of you, in the name of

God, and of the oath your Majesty swore when you placed on your head the crown of this kingdom!"

"You have my protection," said the King, a little confused by an appeal so unexpected and so solemn. "Do but remain quiet with this lady, with whom your parents have placed you; neither Buckingham nor any one else shall intrude on you."

"His Majesty," added Buckingham, in the same tone, and speaking from the restless and mischief-making spirit of contradiction, which he never could restrain, even when indulging it was most contrary not only to propriety, but to his own interest,—"His Majesty will protect you, fair lady, from all intrusion, save what must not be termed such."

Alice darted a keen look on the Duke, as if to read his meaning; another on Charles, to know whether she had guessed it rightly. There was a guilty confession on the King's brow, which confirmed Alice's determination to depart. "Your Majesty will forgive me," she said; "it is not here that I can enjoy the advantage of your

royal protection. I am resolved to leave this house. If I am detained, it must be by violence, which I trust no one dare offer me in your Majesty's presence. This gentleman, whom I have long known, will conduct me to my friends."

"We make but an indifferent figure in this scene, methinks," said the King, addressing the Duke of Buckingham, and speaking in a whisper; "but she must go—I neither will, nor dare, stop her from returning to her father."

"And if she does," swore the Duke internally, "I would, as Sir Andrew saith, I might never touch fair lady's hand." And stepping back, he spoke a few words with Empson the musician, who left the apartment for a few minutes, and presently returned.

The King seemed irresolute concerning the part he should act under circumstances so peculiar. To be foiled in a gallant intrigue, was to subject himself to the ridicule of his gay court; to persist in it by any means which approached to constraint, would have been tyrannical; and, what perhaps he might judge as severe an imputation, it would have been unbecoming a gentle-

man. "Upon my honour, young lady," he said, with an emphasis, "you have nothing to fear in this house. But it is improper, for your own sake, that you should leave it in this abrupt manner. If you will have the goodness to wait but a quarter of an hour, Mistress Chiffinch's coach will be placed at your command, to transport you where you will. Spare yourself the ridicule, and me the pain, of seeing you leave the house of one of my servants, as if you were escaping from a prison."

The King spoke in good-natured sincerity, and Alice was inclined for an instant to listen to his advice; but recollecting that she had to search for her father and uncle, or, failing them, for some suitable place of secure residence, it rushed on her mind that the attendants of Mistress Chiffinch were not likely to prove trusty guides or assistants in such a purpose. Firmly and respectfully she announced her purpose of instant departure. She needed no other escort, she said, than what this gentleman, Master Julian Peveril, who was well known to her father, would will-

ingly afford her; nor did she need that farther, than until she had reached her father's residence.

"Farewell then, lady, a God's name," said the King; "I am sorry so much beauty should be wedded to so many shrewish suspicions.—For you, Master Peveril, I should have thought you had enough to do with your own affairs, without interfering with the humours of the fair sex. The duty of conducting all strayed damsels into the right path, is, as matters go in this good city, rather too weighty an undertaking for your youth and inexperience."

Julian, eager to conduct Alice safe from a place of which he began fully to appreciate the perils, answered nothing to this taunt, but, bowing reverently, led her from the apartment. Her sudden appearance, and the animated scene which followed, had entirely absorbed, for the moment, the recollection of his father, and of the Countess of Derby; and while the dumb attendant of the latter remained in the room, a silent, and, as it were, stunned spectator of all that had happened, Peveril had become, in the predominating interest of Alice's critical situation, totally forgetful of her

presence. But no sooner had he left the room, without noticing or attending to her, than Fenella, starting as from a trance, drew herself up, and looked wildly around, like one waking from a dream, as if to assure herself that her companion was gone, and gone without paying the slightest attention to her. She folded her hands together, and cast her eyes upwards, with an expression of such agony as explained to Charles (as he thought) what painful ideas were passing in her mind. "This Peveril is a perfect pattern of successful perfidy," said the King; "he has not only succeeded at first sight in carrying off this Queen of the Amazons, but he has left us, I think, a disconsolate Ariadne in her place.—But weep not, my princess of pretty movements," he said, addressing himself to Fenella; "if we cannot call in Bacchus to console you, we will commit you to the care of Empson, who shall drink with *Liber Pater* for a thousand pounds, and I will say done first."

As the King spoke these words, Fenella rushed past him with her wonted rapidity of step, and, with much less courtesy than was due to the royal presence, hurried down stairs, and out of the

house, without attempting to open any communication with the Monarch. He saw her abrupt departure with more surprise than displeasure; and presently afterwards, bursting into a fit of laughter, he said to the Duke, "Oddsfish, George, this young spark might teach the best of us how to manage the wenches. I have had my own experience, but I could never yet contrive either to win or lose them with such little ceremony."

"Experience, sir," replied the Duke, "cannot be acquired without years."

"True, George; and you would, I suppose, insinuate," said Charles, "that the gallant who acquires it, loses as much in youth as he gains in art? I defy your insinuation, George. You cannot overreach your master, old as you think him, either in love or politics. You have not the secret *plumer la poule sans la faire crier*, witness this morning's work. I will give you odds at all games—ay, and at the Mall too, if thou darest accept my challenge.—Chiffinch, what for doest thou spoil thy pretty face with sobbing and hatching tears, which seem rather unwilling to make their appearance?"

"It is for fear," whined Chiffinch, "that your Majesty should think—that you should expect—"

"That I should expect gratitude from a courtier, or faith from a woman?" answered the King, patting her at the same time under the chin, to make her raise her face—"Tush, chicken, I am not so superfluous."

"There it is, now," said Chiffinch, continuing to sob the more bitterly, as she felt herself unable to produce any tears; "I see your Majesty is determined to lay all the blame on me, when I am innocent as an unborn babe—I will be judged by his Grace."

"No doubt, no doubt, Chiffie," said the King. "His Grace and you will be excellent judges in each other's cause, and as good witnesses in each other's favour. But to investigate the matter impartially, we must examine our evidence apart.—My Lord Duke, we meet at the Mall at noon, if your Grace dare accept my challenge."

His Grace of Buckingham bowed, and retired.

CHAPTER IX.

> But when the bully, with assuming pace,
> Cocks his broad hat, edged round with tarnish'd lace,
> Yield not the way—defy his strutting pride,
> And thrust him to the muddy kennel's side.
> Yet rather bear the shower and toils of mud,
> Than in the doubtful quarrel risk thy blood.
>
> GAY's *Trivia.*

JULIAN PEVERIL, half-leading, half-supporting Alice Bridgenorth, had reached the middle of St James's Street ere the doubt occurred to him which way they should bend their course. He then asked Alice whither he should conduct her, and learned, to his surprise and embarrassment, that, far from knowing where her father was to be found, she had no certain knowledge that he was in London, and only hoped that he had arrived, from the expressions which he had used at parting. She mentioned her uncle Christian's address, but it was with doubt and hesitation, arising from the

hands in which he had already placed her; and her reluctance to go again under his protection was strongly confirmed by her youthful guide, when a few words had established to his conviction the identity of Ganlesse and Christian.—What then was to be done?

"Alice," said Julian, after a moment's reflection, "you must seek your earliest and best friend —I mean my mother. She has now no castle in which to receive you—she has but a miserable lodging, so near the jail in which my father is confined, that it seems almost a cell of the same prison. I have not seen her since my coming hither; but thus much have I learned by inquiry. We will now go to her apartment; such as it is, I know she will share it with one so innocent and so unprotected as you are."

"Gracious Heaven!" said the poor girl, "am I then so totally deserted, that I must throw myself on the mercy of her who, of all the world, has most reason to spurn me from her?—Julian, can you advise me to this?—Is there none else who will afford me a few hours' refuge, till I can hear

from my father ?—No other protectress but her whose ruin has I fear been accelerated by—— Julian, I dare not appear before your mother ! she must hate me for my family, and despise me for my meanness. To be a second time cast on her protection, when the first has been so evil repaid—Julian, I dare not go with you."

"She has never ceased to love you, Alice," said her conductor, whose steps she continued to attend, even while declaring her resolution not to go with him, "she never felt any thing but kindness towards you, nay, towards your father ; for though his dealings with us have been harsh, she can allow much for the provocation which he has received. Believe me, with her you will be safe as with a mother—perhaps may be the means of reconciling the divisions by which we have suffered so much."

"Might God grant it !" said Alice. "Yet how shall I face your mother ? And will she have power to protect me against these powerful men ? —against my uncle Christian ? Alas, that I must call him my worst enemy !"

" She has the ascendancy which honour hath over infamy, and virtue over vice," said Julian; " and to no human power but your father's will she resign you, if you consent to chuse her for your protectress. Come, then, with me, Alice; and——"

Julian was interrupted by some one, who, laying an unceremonious hold of his cloak, pulled it with so much force as compelled him to stop and lay his hand on his sword. He turned at the same time, and when he turned, beheld Fenella. The cheek of the mute glowed like fire; her eyes sparkled, and her lips were forcibly drawn together, as if she had difficulty to repress those wild screams which usually attended her agonies of passion, and which, uttered in the open street, must instantly have collected a crowd. As it was, her appearance was so singular, and her emotion so evident, that men gazed as they came on, and looked back after they had passed, at the singular vivacity of her gestures; while, holding Peveril's cloak with one hand, she made, with the other, the most eager and imperious signs that he should leave Alice Bridgenorth and follow her.

She touched the plume in her bonnet, to remind him of the Earl—pointed to her heart, to intimate the Countess—raised her closed hand, as if to command him in their name—and next moment folded both, as if to supplicate him in her own; while pointing to Alice with an expression at once of angry and scornful derision, she waved her hand repeatedly and disdainfully, to intimate that Peveril ought to cast her off, as something undeserving his protection.

Frightened, she knew not why, at these wild gestures, Alice clung closer to Julian's arm than she had at first dared to do; and this mark of confidence in his protection seemed to increase the passion of Fenella.

Julian was dreadfully embarrassed; his situation was sufficiently precarious, even before Fenella's ungovernable passions threatened to ruin the only plan which he had been able to suggest. What she wanted with him—how far the fate of the Earl and Countess might depend on his following her, he could not even conjecture; but be the call how peremptory soever, he resolved not to comply with it until he had seen Alice placed in safety. In the mean time, he determined not

to lose sight of Fenella; and disregarding her repeated, disdainful, and impetuous rejection of the hand which he offered her, he at length seemed so far to have soothed her, that she seized upon his right arm, and as if despairing of his following *her* path, appeared reconciled to attend him on that which he himself should chuse.

Thus, with a youthful female clinging to each arm, and both remarkably calculated to attract the public eye, though from very different reasons, Julian resolved to make the shortest road to the water-side, and there to take boat for Blackfriars, as the nearest point of landing to the Fleet-[illegible]n, where he concluded that Lance had already announced his arrival in London to Sir Geoffrey, then inhabiting that dismal region, and to his lady, who, so far as the jailor's rigour permitted, shared and softened his imprisonment.

Julian's embarrassment in passing Charing-Cross and Northumberland-House was so great as to excite the attention of the passengers; for he had to compose his steps so as to moderate the unequal and rapid pace of Fenella to the timid and faint progress of his left-hand companion; and

while it would have been needless to address himself to the former, who could not comprehend him, he dared not speak himself to Alice, for fear of awakening into frenzy the jealousy, or at least the impatience, of Fenella.

Many passengers looked at them with wonder, and some with smiles; but Julian remarked that there were two who never lost sight of them, and to whom his situation, and the demeanour of his companions, seemed to afford matter of undisguised merriment. These were young men, such as may be seen in the same precincts in the present day, allowing for the difference in the fashion of their apparel. They abounded in periwig, and fluttered with many hundred yards of ribband, disposed in bow-knots upon the sleeves, their breeches, and their waist-coats, in the very extremity of the existing mode. A quantity of lace and embroidery made their habits rather fine than tasteful. In a word, they were dressed in that caricature of the fashion, which sometimes denotes a hair-brained man of quality who has a mind to be distinguished as a fop of the first order, but is much more frequently the disguise of those who

desire to be esteemed men of rank on account of their dress, having no other pretension to the distinction.

These two gallants passed Peveril more than once, linked arm in arm, then sauntered, so as to oblige him to pass them in turn, laughing and whispering during these manœuvres—staring broadly at Peveril and his female companions—and affording them, as they came into contact, none of those facilities of giving place which are required on such occasions by the ordinary rules of the pavé.

Peveril did not immediately observe their impertinence; but when it was too gross to escape his notice, his gall began to arise; and in addition to all the other embarrassments of his situation, he had to combat the longing desire which he felt to cudgel handsomely the two coxcombs who seemed thus determined on insulting him. Patience and sufferance were indeed strongly imposed on him by circumstances; but at length it became scarce possible to observe their dictates any longer.

When, for the third time, Julian found him-

self obliged, with his companions, to pass this troublesome brace of fops, they kept walking close behind him, speaking so loud as to be heard, and in a tone of perfect indifference whether he listened to them or not.

"This is bumpkin's best luck," said the taller of the two, (who was indeed a man of remarkable size,) alluding to the plainness of Peveril's dress, which was scarce fit for the streets of London—"Two such fine wenches, and under guard of a grey frock and an oaken riding-rod!"

"Nay, Puritan's luck rather, and more than enough of it," said his companion. "You may read Puritan in his pace and in his patience."

"Right as a pint bumper, Tom," said his friend—"Issachar is an ass that stoopeth between two burthens."

"I have a mind to ease long-eared Laurence of one of his incumbrances," said the shorter fellow. "That black-eyed sparkler looks as if she had a mind to run away from him."

"Ay," answered the taller, "and the blue-eyed trembler looks as if she would fall behind into my loving arms."

At these words, Alice, holding still closer by Peveril's arm than formerly, mended her pace almost to running, in order to escape from men whose language was so alarming; and Fenella walked hastily forward in the same manner, having perhaps caught, from the men's gestures and demeanour, that apprehension which Alice had taken from their language.

Fearful of the consequences of a fray in the streets, which must necessarily part him from these unprotected females, Peveril endeavoured to compound betwixt the prudence necessary for their protection and his own rising resentment; and as this troublesome couple of attendants endeavoured again to pass them close to Hungerford Stairs, he said to them, with constrained calmness, "Gentlemen, I owe you something for the attention you have bestowed on the affairs of a stranger. If you have any pretension to the name I have given you, you will tell me where you are to be found."

"And with what purpose," said the taller of the two, sneeringly, "does your most rustic

gravity, or your most grave rusticity, require of us such information?"

So saying, they both faced about, in such a manner as to make it impossible for Julian to advance any farther.

"Make for the stairs, Alice," he said; "I will be with you in an instant." Then freeing himself with difficulty from the grasp of his companions, he cast his cloak hastily round his left arm, and said, sternly, to his opponents, "Will you give me your names, sirs; or will you be pleased to make way?"

"Not till we know for whom we are to give place," said one of them.

"For one who will else teach you what you want—good manners," said Peveril, and advanced, as if to push between them.

They separated, but one of them stretched forth his foot before Peveril, as if he meant to trip him. The blood of his ancestors was already boiling within him, he struck the man on the face with the oaken rod which he had just sneered at, and throwing it from him, instantly unsheathed his sword. Both the others drew, and pushed

at once; but he caught the point of the one rapier in his cloak, and parried the other thrust with his own weapon. He might have been less lucky in the second close, but a cry arose among the watermen, of "Shame, shame! two upon one?"

"They are men of the Duke of Buckingham's," said one fellow—"there's no safe meddling with them."

"They may be the devil's men, if they will," said an ancient Triton, flourishing his stretcher; "but I say fair play, and old England for ever; and, I say, knock the gold-laced puppies down, unless they will fight turn-about with gray jerkin, like honest fellows. One down—t'other come on."

The lower orders of London have in all times been remarkable for the delight which they have taken in club-law, or fist-law; and for the equity and impartiality with which they see it administered. The noble science of defence was then so generally known, that a bout at single rapier excited at that time as much interest and as little wonder as a boxing-match in our own days. The bye-standers, experienced in such affrays,

presently formed a ring, within which Peveril and the taller and more forward of his antagonists were soon engaged in close combat with their swords, whilst the other, overawed by the spectators, was prevented from interfering.

"Well done the tall fellow!"—"Well thrust, long-legs!"—"Huzza for two ells and a quarter!" were the sounds with which the fray was at first cheered; for Peveril's opponent not only shewed great activity and skill in fence, but had also a decided advantage, from the anxiety with which Julian looked out for Alice Bridgenorth; the care for whose safety diverted him in the beginning of the onset from that which he ought to have exclusively bestowed on the defence of his own life. A slight flesh-wound in the side at once punished, and warned him of, his inadvertence; when, turning his whole thoughts on the business in which he was engaged, and animated with anger against this impertinent intruder, the rencontre speedily began to assume another face, amidst cries of "Well done, grey jerkin!"—"Try the metal of his gold doublet!"—"Finely thrust!"—"Curiously parried!"—"There

went another eylit hole to his broidered jerkin !" —" Fairly pinked, by G—d !" In fact, the last exclamation was uttered amid a general roar of applause, accompanying a successful and conclusive lounge, by which Peveril ran his gigantic antagonist through the body. He looked at his prostrate foe for a moment; then, recovering himself, called loudly to know what had become of the lady.

" Never mind the lady, if you be wise," said one of the watermen; " the constable will be here in an instant. I'll give your honour a cast over the water in an instant. It may be as much as your neck's worth. Shall only charge a Jacobus."

" You be d—d," said one of his rivals in profession, " as your father was before you; for a Jacobus, I'll set the gentleman into Alsatia, where neither bailiff or constable dare trespass."

" The lady, you scoundrels, the lady !" exclaimed Peveril—" where is the lady ?"

" I'll carry your honour where you shall have enough of ladies, if that be your want," said the old Triton; and as he spoke, the clamour

amongst the watermen was renewed, each hoping to cut his own profit out of the emergency of Julian's situation.

"A sculler will be least suspected, your honour," said one fellow.

"A pair of oars will carry you through the water like a wild-duck," said another.

"But you have got never a tilt, brother," said a third. "Now I can put the gentleman as snug as if he were under hatches."

In the midst of the oaths and clamour attending this aquatic controversy for his custom, Peveril at length made them understand that he would bestow a Jacobus, not on him whose boat was first oars, but on whomsoever should inform him of the fate of the lady.

"Of which lady?" said a sharp fellow; "for, to my thought, there was a pair on them."

"Of both, of both," answered Peveril; "but first, of the fair-haired lady?"

"Ay, ay, that was she that shrieked so when goldjacket's companion handed her into No. 20."

"Who—what—who dared to hand her?' exclaimed Peveril.

"Nay, master, you have heard enough of my tale without a fee," said the waterman.

"Sordid rascal!" said Peveril, giving him a gold piece, "speak out, or I'll run my sword through you!"

"For the matter of that, master," answered the fellow, "not while I can handle this trunnion—but a bargain's a bargain; and so I'll tell you, for your gold piece, that the comrade of the fellow forced one of your wenches, her with the fair hair, will she nill she, into Tickling Tom's wherry; and they are far enough up Thames by this time, with wind and tide."

"Sacred heaven, and I stand here!" exclaimed Julian.

"Why, that is because your honour will not take a boat."

"You are right, my friend—a boat—a boat instantly!"

"Follow me, then, squire.—Here, Tom, bear a hand—the gentleman is our fare."

A volley of water language was exchanged betwixt the successful candidate for Peveril's custom and his disappointed brethren, which conclu-

ded by the ancient Triton's bellowing out, in a tone above them all, "That the gentleman was in a fair way to make a voyage to the isle of gulls, for that sly Jack was only bantering him—No. 20 had rowed for York-Buildings."

"To the isle of gallows," cried another; "for here comes one who will mar his trip up Thames, and carry him down to Execution-Dock."

In fact, as he spoke the word, a constable, with three or four of his assistants, armed with the old-fashioned brown bills, which were still used for arming these guardians of the peace, cut off our hero's further progress to the water's edge, by arresting him in the King's name. To attempt resistance would have been madness, as he was surrounded on all sides; so Peveril was disarmed, and carried before the nearest Justice of the Peace, for examination and committal.

The legal sage before whom Julian was taken, was a man very honest in his intentions, very bounded in his talents, and rather timid in his disposition. Before the general alarm given to England, and to the city of London in particular, by the notable discovery of the Popish Plot, Master

Maulstatute had taken serene and undisturbed pride and pleasure in the discharge of his duties as a Justice of the Peace, with the exercise of all its honorary privileges and awful authority. But the murther of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey had made a strong, nay, an indelible impression on his mind; and he walked the courts of Themis with fear and trembling after that memorable and melancholy event.

Having a high idea of his official importance, and rather an exalted notion of his personal consequence, his Honour saw nothing from that time but cords and daggers before his eyes, and never stepped out of his own house, which he fortified, and in some measure garrisoned, with half a dozen tall watchmen and constables, without seeing himself watched by a Papist in disguise, with a drawn sword under his cloak. It was even whispered, that, in the agonies of his fears, the worshipful Master Maulstatute mistook the kitchen-wench with a tinder-box, for a Jesuit with a pistol; but if any one dared to laugh at such an error, he would have done well to conceal his mirth, lest he fell under the heavy inculpation of being a ban-

terer and stifler of the Plot—a crime almost as deep as that of being himself a plotter. In fact, the fears of the honest Justice, however ridiculously exorbitant, were kept so much in countenance by the outcry of the day, and the general nervous fever which afflicted every good Protestant, that Master Maulstatute was accounted the bolder man and the better magistrate, while, under the terror of the air-drawn dagger which fancy placed continually before his eyes, he continued to dole forth justice in the recesses of his private chamber, nay, occasionally to attend Quarter-sessions, when the hall was guarded by a sufficient body of the militia. Such was the wight, at whose door, well-chained and doubly bolted, the constable who had Julian in custody now gave his important and well-known knock.

Notwithstanding this official signal, the party was not admitted until the clerk, who acted the part of high-warder, had reconnoitred them through a grated wicket; for who could say whether the Papists might not have made themselves master of Master Constable's sign, and have prepared a pseudo-watch to burst in and murther the

Justice, under pretence of bringing a criminal before him?—Less hopeful projects had figured in the narrative of the Popish Plot.

All being found right, the key was turned, the bolts were drawn, and the chain unhooked, so as to permit entrance to the constable, the prisoner, and the assistants; and was then as suddenly shut against the witnesses, who, as less trust-worthy persons, were requested (through the wicket) to remain in the yard, until they should be called in their respective turns.

Had Julian been inclined for mirth, as was far from being the case, he must have smiled at the incongruity of the clerk's apparel, who had belted over his black buckram suit a buff baldrick, sustaining a broad-sword, and a pair of huge horse-pistols; and instead of the low flat hat, which, coming in place of the city cap, completed the dress of a scrivener, had placed on his greasy locks a rusted steel cap, which had seen Marston-moor; across which projected his well-used quill, in the guise of a plume—the shape of the morion not admitting of its being stuck, as usual, behind his ear.

This whimsical figure conducted the constable, his assistants, and the prisoner, into the low hall, where his principal dealt forth justice; who presented an appearance still more singular than that of his dependant.

Sundry good Protestants, who thought so highly of themselves as to suppose they were worthy to be distinguished as objects of Catholic cruelty, had taken to defensive arms on the occasion. But it was quickly found that a breast-plate and back-plate of proof, fastened together with iron clasps, was no convenient inclosure for a man who meant to eat venison and custard; and that a buff-coat, or shirt of mail, was scarcely more accommodating to the exertions necessary on such active occasions. Besides, there were other objections, as the alarming and menacing aspect which such warlike habiliments gave to the Exchange, and other places, where merchants most do congregate; and excoriations were bitterly complained of by many, who, not belonging to the artillery company, or trained bands, had no experience in bearing defensive armour.

To obviate these objections, and at the same time to secure the persons of all true Protestant citizens against open force or privy assassinations on the part of the Papists, some ingenious artist, belonging, we may presume, to the worshipful Mercers' Company, had contrived a species of armour, of which neither the horse-armoury in the Tower, nor Gwynnap's Gothic-Hall, no, nor Dr Meyrick's invaluable collection of ancient arms, has preserved any specimen. It was called silk armour, being composed of a doublet and breeches of quilted silk, so closely stitched, and of such thickness, as to be proof against either bullet or steel; while a thick bonnet, of the same materials, with ear-flaps attached to it, and on the whole much resembling a night-cap, completed the equipment, and ascertained the security of the wearer from the head to the knee.

Master Maulstatute, among other worthy citizens, had adopted this singular panoply, which had the advantage of being soft, and warm, and flexible, as well as safe. And he now sate in his judicial elbow-chair—a short, rotund figure, hung round, as it were, with cushions, for such was the

appearance of the quilted garments; and with a nose protruded out from under the silken casque, the size of which, together with the unwieldiness of the whole figure, gave his worship no indifferent resemblance to the sign of the Hog in Armour, which was considerably improved by the defensive garment being of a dusky orange-colour, not altogether unlike the hue of those wild swine which are to be found in the forests of Hampshire.

Secure in these invulnerable envelopements, his worship had rested content, although severed from his own death-doing weapons, of rapier, poniard, and pistols, which were placed, nevertheless, at no great distance from his chair. One offensive implement, indeed, he thought it prudent to keep on the table beside his huge Coke upon Littleton. This was a sort of pocket-flail, consisting of a piece of strong ash, about eighteen inches long, to which was attached a swinging club of *lignum-vitæ*, nearly twice as long as the handle, but jointed so as to be easily folded up. This instrument, which bore at that time the singular name of the Protestant flail, might be con-

cealed under the coat, until circumstances demanded its public appearance. A better precaution against surprise than his arms, whether offensive or defensive, was a strong iron grating, which, crossing the room in front of the Justice's table, and communicating by a grated door which was usually kept locked, effectually separated the accused party from his Judge.

Justice Maulstatute, such as we have described him, chose to hear the accusation of the witnesses before calling on Peveril for his defence. The detail of the affray was briefly given by the by-standers, and seemed deeply to touch the spirit of the examinator. He shook his silken casque emphatically, when he understood that, after some language betwixt the parties, which the witnesses did not quite understand, the young man in custody struck the first blow, and drew his sword before the wounded party had unsheathed his weapon. Again he shook his crested head yet more solemnly, when the result of the conflict was known; and yet again, when one of the witnesses declared, that, to the best of his knowledge, the sufferer in the fray was a gentle-

man belonging to the household of his Grace the Duke of Buckingham.

"A worthy peer," quoth the armed magistrate—"a true Protestant, and a friend to his country. Mercy on us, to what a height of audacity hath this age arisen! We see well, and could, were we as blind as a mole, out of what quiver this shaft hath been drawn."

He then put on his spectacles, and having desired Julian to be brought forward, he glared upon him awfully with those glazen eyes, from under the shade of his quilted turban.

"So young," he said, "and so hardened—lack-a-day!—and a Papist, I'll warrant."

Peveril had time enough to recollect the necessity of his being at large, if he could possibly obtain his freedom, and interposed here a civil contradiction of his worship's gracious supposition. "He was no Catholic," he said, "but an unworthy member of the Church of England."

"Perhaps but a luke-warm Protestant, notwithstanding," said the sage Justice; "there are those amongst us who ride *tantivie* to Rome, and have already made out half the journey—ahem!"

Peveril disowned his being any such.

"And who art thou, then?" said the Justice; "for, friend, to tell you plainly, I like not your visage—ahem!"

These short and emphatic coughs were accompanied each by a succinct nod, intimating the perfect conviction of the speaker that he had made the best, the wisest, and the most acute observation, of which the premises admitted.

Julian, irritated by the whole circumstances of his detention, answered the Justice's interrogation in rather a lofty tone. "My name is Julian Peveril!"

"Now, Heaven be around us!" said the terrified Justice—"the son of that black-hearted Papist and traitor, Sir Geoffrey Peveril, now in hands, and on the verge of trial!!"

"How, sir!" exclaimed Julian, forgetting his situation, and stepping forward to the grating, with a violence which made the bars clatter, he so startled the appalled Justice, that, snatching his Protestant flail, Master Maulstatute aimed a blow at his prisoner, to repel what he apprehended was a premeditated attack. But whe-

ther it was owing to the Justice's hurry of mind, or inexperience in managing the weapon, he not only missed his aim, but brought the swinging part of the machine round on his own skull, with such a severe counter-buff, as completely to try the efficacy of his cushioned helmet, and, in spite of its defence, to convey a stunning sensation, which he rather hastily imputed to the consequence of a blow received from Peveril.

His assistants did not indeed directly confirm the opinion which the Justice had so unwarrantably adopted, but all with one voice agreed, that but for their own active and instantaneous interference, there was no knowing what mischief might have been done by a person so dangerous as the prisoner. The general opinion that he meant to proceed in the matter of his own rescue, *par voie du fait*, was indeed so deeply impressed on all present, that Julian saw it would be in vain to offer any defence, especially being but too conscious that the alarming, and probably the fatal consequences of his rencontre, rendered his commitment inevitable.

He contented himself with asking into what prison he was to be thrown; and when the formidable word Newgate was returned as full answer, he had at least the satisfaction to reflect, that, stern and dangerous as was the shelter of that roof, he would at least enjoy it in company with his father; and that, by some means or other, they might perhaps obtain the satisfaction of a melancholy meeting, under the circumstances of mutual calamity, which seemed impending over their house.

Assuming the virtue of more patience than he actually possessed, Julian gave the magistrate, (whom all the mildness of his demeanour could not however reconcile to him,) the direction to the house where he lodged, together with a request that his servant, Lance Outram, might be permitted to send him his money and wearing apparel; adding, that all which might be in his possession, either of arms or writings,—the former amounting to a pair of travelling pistols, and the last to a few memoranda of little consequence,—he willingly consented to place at the disposal of the magistrates. It was in that moment that he en-

tertained, with sincere satisfaction, the comforting reflection, that the important papers of Lady Derby were already in possession of the Sovereign.

The Justice promised attention to his requests; but reminded him, with great dignity, that his present complacent and submissive behaviour ought, for his own sake, to have been adopted from the beginning, instead of disturbing the presence of magistracy with such atrocious marks of the malignant, rebellious, and murderous spirit of Popery, as he had at first exhibited. "Yet," he said, "as he was a goodly young man, and of honourable quality, he would not suffer him to be dragged through the streets as a felon, but had ordered a coach for his accommodation."

His honour, Master Maulstatute, uttered the word "coach" with the importance of one who, as Dr Johnson saith of later date, is conscious of the dignity of putting horses to his chariot. The worshipful Master Maulstatute did not, however, on this occasion, do Julian the honour of yoking to his huge family caroche the

two "frampal jades," (to use the term of the period,) which were wont to drag that ark to the meeting-house of pure and precious Master Howlaglass on a Thursday's evening for lecture, and on a Sunday for a four hours sermon. He had recourse to a leathern convenience, then more rare, but just introduced, with every prospect of the great facility which has since been afforded by hackney coaches, to all manner of communication, honest and dishonest, legal and illegal. Our friend Julian, hitherto much more accustomed to the saddle than to any other conveyance, soon found himself in a hackney carriage, with the constable and two assistants for his companions, armed up to the teeth—the port of destination being, as they had already intimated, the ancient fortress of Newgate.

CHAPTER X.

'Tis the black ban-dog of our jail—Pray look on him,
But at a wary distance—rouse him not—
He bays not till he worries.

The Black Dog of Newgate.

The coach stopped before those tremendous gates, which resemble those of Tartarus, save only that they rather more frequently permit safe and honourable egress; although at the price of the same anxiety and labour with which Hercules, and one or two of the demi-gods, extricated themselves from the Hell of the ancient mythology.

Julian stepped out of the vehicle, carefully supported on either side by his companions, and also by one or two turnkeys, whom the first summons of the deep bell at the gate had called to their assistance. That attention, it may be guessed, was not bestowed lest he should make

a false step, so much as for fear of his attempting an escape, of which he had no intentions. A few prentices and straggling boys of the neighbouring market, which derived considerable advantage from increase of custom, in consequence of the numerous committals on account of the Popish Plot, and who therefore were zealous Protestants, saluted him on his descent with jubilee shouts of "Whoop, Papist! whoop, Papist! D——n to the Pope, and all his adherents!"

Under such auspices, Peveril was ushered in beneath that gloomy gateway, where so many bid adieu on their entrance at once to honour and to life. The dark and dismal arch under which he soon found himself, opened upon a large court-yard, where a number of debtors were employed in playing at hand-ball, pitch-and-toss, hustle-cap, and other games; for which relaxations the rigour of their creditors afforded them full leisure, while it debarred them the means of pursuing the honest labour by which they might have redeemed their affairs, and maintained their starving and beggared families.

But with this careless and desperate group Julian was not to be numbered, being led, or rather forced, by his conductors, into a low-arched door, which, carefully secured by bolts and bars, opened for his reception on one side of the archway, and closed, with all its fastenings, on the moment after his hasty entrance. He was then conducted along two or three gloomy passages, which, where they intersected each other, were guarded by as many strong wickets, one of iron grates, and the others of stout oak, clenched with plates, and studded with nails of the same metal. He was not allowed to pause until he found himself hurried into a little round vaulted room, which several of these passages opened into, and which seemed, with respect to the labyrinth through part of which he had passed, to resemble the central point of a spider's web, in which the main lines of that reptile's curious maze are always found to terminate.

The resemblance did not end here; for in this small vaulted apartment, the walls of which were hung round with musketoons, pistols, cutlasses, and other weapons, as well as with many sets of

fetters and irons of different construction, all disposed in great order, and ready for employment, a person sat, who might not unaptly be compared to a huge bloated and bottled spider, placed there to secure the prey which had fallen into his toils.

This official had originally been a very strong and square-built man, of large size, but was now so overgrown from over-feeding perhaps, and want of exercise, as to bear the same resemblance to his former self which a stall-fed ox still retains to a wild bull. The look of no man is so inauspicious as of a fat man, upon whose features ill-nature has marked a habitual stamp. He seems to have reversed the old proverb, and to have thriven under the influence of the worst affections of the mind. Passionate we can allow a jolly mortal to be; but it seems unnatural to his goodly case to be sulky and brutal. Now this man's features, surly and tallow-coloured; his limbs swelled and disproportioned; his huge paunch and unwieldy carcase, suggested the idea, that, having once found his way into this central recess, he had there battened, like the weasel in the fable, and fed largely

and foully, until he had become incapable of retreating through any of the narrow paths that terminated upon his cell; and was there compelled to remain, like a toad under the cold stone, fattening amid the squalid airs of the dungeons by which he was surrounded, which would have proved pestiferous to any other than such a congenial inhabitant. Huge iron-clasped books lay before this ominous specimen of pinguitude—the records of the realm of misery, in which he officiated as prime minister; and had Peveril come thither as an unconcerned visitor, his heart would have sunk within him at considering the mass of human wretchedness which must needs be registered in these fatal volumes. But his own distresses sat too heavy on his mind to permit any general reflections of this nature.

The constable and this bulky official whispered together, after the former had delivered to the latter the warrant of Julian's commitment. The word *whispered* is not quite accurate, for their communication was carried on less by words than by looks and expressive signs; by which, in all such situations, men learn to supply the use of

language, and to add mystery to what is in itself sufficiently terrible to the captive. The only words which could be heard were those of the Warden, or, as he was called then, the Captain of the Jail,* "Another bird to the cage?——"

"Who will whistle 'Pretty Pope of Rome,' with any starling in your Knight's ward," answered the constable, with a facetious air, checked, however, by the due respect to the superior presence in which he stood.

The Grim Feature relaxed into something like a smile as he heard the officer's observation; but instantly composing himself into the stern solemnity which for an instant had been disturbed, he looked fiercely at his new guest, and pronounced, with an awful and emphatic, yet rather an under-voice, the single and impressive word, "*Garnish!*"

Julian Peveril replied with assumed composure; for he had heard of the customs of such places, and was resolved to comply with them, so as if possible to obtain the favour of seeing his father, which he shrewdly guessed must depend on

his gratifying the avarice of the keeper. "I am quite ready," he said, "to accede to the customs of the place in which I unhappily find myself. You have but to name your demands, and I will satisfy them."

So saying, he drew out his purse, thinking himself at the same time fortunate that he had retained about him a considerable sum of gold. The Captain remarked its width, depth, its extension and depression, with an involuntary smile, which had scarce contorted his hanging under lip, and the wiry and greasy mustachio which thatched the upper, than it was checked by the recollection that there were regulations which set bounds to his rapacity, and prevented him from pouncing on his prey like a kite, and swooping it all off at once.

This chilling reflection produced the following sullen reply to Peveril:—"There were sundry rates. Gentlemen must chuse for themselves. He asked nothing but his fees. But civility," he muttered, "must be paid for."

"And shall, if I can have it for payment," said Peveril; "but the price, my good sir, the price?"

He spoke with some degree of scorn, which he was the less anxious to repress, that he saw, even in this jail, his purse gave him an indirect but powerful influence over his jailor.

The Captain seemed to feel the same; for, as he spoke, he plucked from his head, almost involuntarily, a sort of scalded fur-cap, which served it for covering. But his fingers revolting from so unusual an act of complaisance, began to indemnify themselves by scratching his grizzly shock-head, as he muttered, in a tone resembling the softened growling of a mastiff when it has ceased to bay the intruder who shews no fear of him, "There are different rates. There is the Little Ease, for common fees of the crown—rather dark, and the common-sewer runs below it; and some gentlemen object to the company, who are chiefly padders and michers. Then the Master's side—the garnish came to one piece—and none lay stowed there but who were in for murder at the least."

"Name your highest price, sir, and take it,' was Julian's concise reply

"Three pieces for the Knight's ward," answered the governor of this terrestrial Tartarus.

"Take five, and place me with Sir Geoffrey," was again Julian's answer, throwing down the money upon the desk before him.

"Sir Geoffrey?—Hum!—ay, Sir Geoffrey," said the jailor, as if meditating what he ought to do. "Well, many a man has paid money to see Sir Geoffrey—Scarce so much as you have, though. But then you are like to see the last on him—Ha, ha, ha!"

These broken muttered exclamations, which terminated with a laugh somewhat like the joyous growl of a tiger over his meal, Julian could not comprehend; and only replied to, by repeating his request to be placed in the same cell with Sir Geoffrey.

"Ay, master," said the jailor, "never fear; I'll keep word with you, as you seem to know something of what belongs to your station and mine. And hark ye, Jem Clink will fetch you the darbies."

"Derby!" interrupted Julian,—"Has the Earl or Countess——"

"Earl or Countess!—Ha, ha, ha!" again laughed, or rather growled the Warden. "What is your head running on? You are a high fellow, belike; but all is one here. The darbies are the fetlocks—the fast-keepers, my boy; and if you are not the more conforming, I can add you a steel night-cap, and a curious bosom-friend, to keep you warm of a winter night. But don't be disheartened; you have behaved genteel; and you shall not be put upon. And as for this here matter, ten to one it will turn out chance-medley, or manslaughter at the worst on't; and then it is but a singed thumb, instead of a twisted neck—always if there be no Papistry about it, for then I warrant nothing.—Take the gentleman's worship away, Clink."

A turnkey, who was one of the party that had ushered Peveril into the presence of this Cerberus, now conveyed him out in silence; and under his guidance, the prisoner was carried through a second labyrinth of passages, with cells opening on each side, to that which was destined for his reception.

On the road through this sad region, the turn-

key more than once ejaculated, " Why, the gentleman must be stark-mad ! Could have had the best crown cell to himself for less than half the garnish, and must pay double to pig in with Sir Geoffrey. Ha, ha !—Is Sir Geoffrey akin to you, if one may make free to ask ?"

" I am his son," answered Peveril, sternly, in hopes to impose some curb on the fellow's impertinence ; but the man only laughed louder than before.

" His son !—Why that's best of all—Why you are a strapping youth—five feet ten, if you be an inch—and Sir Geoffrey's son—Ha, ha, ha !"

" Truce with your impertinence," said Julian " My situation gives you no title to insult me."

" No more I do," said the turnkey, smothering his mirth at the recollection perhaps that the prisoner's purse was not exhausted. " I only laughed because you said you were Sir Geoffrey's son. But no matter—'tis a wise child that knows his own father. And here is Sir Geoffrey's cell ; so you and he may settle the fatherhood between you."

So saying, he ushered his prisoner into a cell,

or rather a strong room of the better order, in which there were four chairs, a truckle-bed, and one or two other articles of furniture.

Julian looked eagerly around for his father; but to his surprise the room appeared totally empty. He turned with anger on the turnkey, and charged him with misleading him; but the fellow answered, "No, no, master; I have kept faith with you. Your father, if you call him so, is only tappiced in some corner. A small hole will hide him; but I'll rouse him out presently for you.—Here, hoicks!—Turn out, Sir Geoffrey!—Here is—Ha, ha, ha!—your son—or your wife's son—for I think you can have but little share in him—come to wait on you."

Peveril knew not how to resent the man's insolence; and indeed his anxiety, and apprehension of some strange mistake, mingled with, and in some degree neutralized his anger. He looked again and again, around and around the room; until at length he became aware of something rolled up in a dark corner, which rather resembled a small bundle of crimson cloth than any living creature. At the vociferation of the turnkey,

however, the object seemed to acquire life and motion—uncoiled itself in some degree, and, after an effort or two, gained an erect posture; still covered from top to toe with the crimson drapery in which it was at first wrapped. Julian, at the first glance, imagined from the size that he saw a child of five years old; but a shrill and peculiar tone of voice soon assured him of his mistake.

"Warder," said this unearthly sound, "what is the meaning of this disturbance? Have you more insults to heap on the head of one who hath ever been the butt of fortune's malice? But I have a soul that can wrestle with all my misfortunes; it is as large as any of your bodies."

"Nay, Sir Geoffrey, if this be the way you welcome your own son!"—said the turnkey; "but you quality folks know your own ways best."

"My son!" exclaimed the little figure. "Audacious——"

"Here is some strange mistake," said Peveril, in the same breath. "I sought Sir Geoffrey—"

"And you have him before you, young man,"

said the pigmy tenant of the cell, with an air of dignity; at the same time casting on the floor his crimson cloak, and standing before them in his full dignity of three feet six inches of height. " I am the favoured servant of three successive Sovereigns of the Crown of England, now the tenant of this dungeon, and the sport of its brutal keepers. I am Sir Geoffrey Hudson."

Julian, though he had never before seen this important personage, had no difficulty in recognizing, from description, the celebrated dwarf of Henrietta Maria, who had survived the dangers of civil war and private quarrel—the murder of his royal master, Charles I., and the exile of his widow—to fall upon evil tongues and evil days, amidst the unsparing accusations connected with the Popish Plot. He bowed to the unhappy old man, and hastened to explain to him, and to the turnkey, that it was Sir Geoffrey Peveril, of Martindale Castle in Derbyshire, whose prison he had desired to share.

" You should have said that before you parted with the gold-dust, my master," answered the

turnkey; "for t'other Sir Geoffrey, that is the big, tall, grey-haired man, was sent to the Tower last night; and the Captain will think he has kept his word well enow with you, by lodging you with this here Sir Geoffrey Hudson, who is the better show of the two."

"I pray you go to your master," said Peveril; "explain the mistake; and say to him I beg to be sent to the Tower."

"The Tower!—Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed the fellow. "The Tower is for lords and knights, and not for squires of low degree—for high treason, and not for ruffling on the streets with rapier and dagger; and there must go a secretary's warrant to send you there."

"At least, let me not be a burthen on this genleman," said Julian. "There can be no use in quartering us together, since we are not even acquainted. Go tell your master of the mistake."

"Why, so I should," said Clink, still grinning, "if I were not sure that he knew it already. You paid to be sent to Sir Geoffrey, and he sent you to Sir Geoffrey. You are so put down in the re-

gister, and he will blot it for no man. Come, come, be conformable, and you shall have light and easy irons—that's all I can do for you."

Resistance and expostulation being out of the question, Peveril submitted to have a light pair of fetters secured on his ancles, which allowed him, nevertheless, the power of traversing the apartment.

During this operation, he reflected that the jailor, who had taken the advantage of the equivoque betwixt the two Sir Geoffreys, must have acted as his assistant had hinted, and cheated him from malice prepense, since the warrant of committal described him as the son of Sir Geoffrey Peveril. It was therefore in vain, as well as degrading, to make further application to such a man on the subject. Julian determined to submit to his fate, as what could not be averted by any effort of his own.

Even the turnkey was moved in some degree by his youth, good mien, and the patience with which, after the first effervescence of disappointment, the new prisoner resigned himself to his situation. "You seem a brave young gentle-

man," he said; "and shall at least have a good dinner, and as good a pallet to sleep on, as is within the walls of Newgate.—And, Master Sir Geoffrey, you ought to make much of him, since you do not like tall fellows; for I can tell you that Master Peveril is in for pinking long Jack Jenkins, that was the Master of Defence—as tall a man as is in London, always excepting the King's Porter, Master Evans, that carried you about in his pocket, Sir Geoffrey, as all the world has heard tell."

"Begone, fellow!" answered the dwarf. "Fellow, I scorn you!"

The fellow sneered, withdrew, and locked the door behind him.

CHAPTER XI.

Degenerate youth, and not of Tydeus' kind,
Whose little body lodged a mighty mind.

Iliad.

LEFT quiet at least, if not alone, for the first time after the events of this troubled and varied day, Julian threw himself on an old oaken seat, beside the embers of a sea-coal fire, and began to muse on the miserable situation of anxiety and danger in which he was placed; where, whether he contemplated the interests of his love, his family affections, or his friendships, all seemed such a prospect as that of a sailor who looks upon breakers on every hand, from the deck of a vessel which no longer obeys the helm.

As Peveril sat sunk in despondency, his companion in misfortune drew a chair to the opposite

side of the chimney-corner, and began to gaze at him with a sort of solemn earnestness, which at length compelled him, though almost in spite of himself, to pay some attention to the singular figure who seemed so much engrossed with contemplating him.

Geoffrey Hudson, (we drop occasionally the title of knighthood, which the King had bestowed on him in a frolic, but which might introduce some confusion into our history,) although a dwarf of the least possible size, had nothing positively ugly in his countenance, or actually distorted in his limbs. His head, hands, and feet, were indeed large and disproportioned to the height of his body, and his body itself much thicker than was consistent with symmetry, but in a degree which was rather ludicrous than disagreeable to look upon. His countenance, in particular, had he been a little taller, would have been accounted, in youth, handsome, and now, in age, striking and expressive; it was but the uncommon disproportion betwixt the head and the trunk which made the features seem whimsical and bizarre—an effect which was considerably increased

by the dwarf's mustachoes, which it was his pleasure to wear so large, that they almost twisted back amongst, and mingled with, his grizzled hair.

The dress of this singular wight announced that he was not entirely free from the unhappy taste which frequently induces those whom nature has marked by personal deformity, to distinguish, and at the same time to render themselves ridiculous, by the use of showy colours, and garments fantastically and extraordinarily fashioned. But poor Geoffrey Hudson's laces, embroideries, and the rest of his finery, were sorely worn and tarnished by the time which he had spent in jail, under the vague and malicious accusation that he was somehow or other an accomplice in this all-involving, all-devouring whirlpool of a Popish conspiracy—an impeachment which, if pronounced by a mouth the foulest and most malicious, was at that time sufficiently predominant to sully the fairest reputation. It will presently appear, that in the poor man's manner of thinking, and tone of conversation, there was something analogous to his absurd fashion of

apparel; for, as in the latter, good stuff and valuable decorations were rendered ludicrous by the fantastic fashion in which they were made up; so, such glimmerings of good sense and honourable feeling as the little man often evinced, were made ridiculous by a restless desire to assume certain airs of importance; and a great jealousy of being despised, on account of the peculiarity of his outward form.

After the fellow-prisoners had looked at each other for some time in silence, the dwarf, conscious of his dignity as first owner of their joint apartment, thought it necessary to do the honours of it to the new-comer. "Sir," he said, modifying the alternate harsh and squeaking tones of his voice into accents as harmonious as they could attain, "I understand you to be the son of my worthy namesake, and ancient acquaintance, the stout Sir Geoffrey Peveril of the Peak. I promise you, I have seen your father where blows have been going more plenty than gold pieces; and for a tall heavy man, who lacked, as we martialists thought, some of the lightness and activity of our more

slightly made Cavaliers, he performed his duty as a man might desire. I am happy to see you, his son; and, though by a mistake, I am glad we are to share this comfortless cabin together."

Julian bowed and thanked his courtesy; and Geoffrey Hudson having broken the ice, proceeded to question him without farther ceremony. "You are no courtier, I presume, young gentleman?"

Julian replied in the negative.

"I thought so," continued the dwarf; "for although I have now no official duty at court, the region in which my early years were spent, and where I once held a considerable office, yet I still, when I had my liberty, visited the Presence from time to time, as in duty bound for former service; and am wont, from old habit, to take some note of the courtly gallants, those choice spirits of the age, among whom I was once enrolled. You are, not to compliment you, a marked figure, Master Peveril—though something of the tallest, as was your father's case; I think, I could scarce have seen you anywhere without remembering you."

Peveril thought he might with great justice have returned the compliment, but contented himself with saying, " he had scarce seen the British court."

" 'Tis pity," said Hudson; " a gallant can hardly be formed without frequenting it. But you have been perhaps in a rougher school; you have served, doubtless——"

" My Maker, I hope," said Julian.

" Fie on it, you mistake. I meant," said Hudson, " *a la Françoise*,—you have served in the army?"

" No. I have not yet had that honour," said Julian.

" What, neither courtier nor soldier, Master Peveril?" said the important little man: " Your father is to blame. By cock and pye he is, Master Peveril! How shall a man be known, or distinguished, unless by his bearing in peace and war? I tell you, sir, that at Newberry, where I charged with my troop abreast with Prince Rupert, and when, as you may have heard, we were both beaten off by those cuckoldy hinds the Trained Bands of London,—we did what men

could; and I think it was a matter of three or four minutes after most of our gentlemen had been driven off, that his Highness and I continued to cut at their long pikes with our swords; and I think might have broken in, but that I had a tall, long-legged brute of a horse, and my sword was somewhat short,—in fine, at last we were obliged to make volte-face, and then, as I was going to say, the fellows were so glad to get rid of us, that they set up a great jubilee cry of 'There goes Prince Robin and Cock Robin!'—Ay, ay, every scoundrel among them knew me well. But these days are over.—And where were you educated, young gentleman?"

Peveril named the household of the Countess of Derby.

"A most honourable lady, upon my word as a gentleman," said Hudson.—"I knew the noble Countess well, when I was about the person of my royal mistress, Henrietta Maria. She was then the very muster of all that was noble, loyal, and lovely. She was, indeed, one of the fifteen fair ones of the court, whom I permitted to call me Piccoluomini;—a foolish jest on my somewhat diminutive figure, which always distinguish-

ed me from ordinary beings, even when I was young—I have now lost much stature by stooping; but, always the ladies had their jest at me. —Perhaps, young man, I had my own amends of some of them somewhere, and somehow or other—I *say* nothing if I had or no. But certainly to serve the ladies, and condescend to their humours, even when somewhat too free, or too fantastic, is the true decorum of gentle blood."

Depressed as his spirits were, Peveril could scarce forbear smiling when he looked at the pigmy creature, who told these stories with infinite complacency, and appeared disposed to proclaim, as his own herald, that he had been a very model of valour and gallantry, though love and arms seemed to be pursuits totally irreconcileable to his shrivelled, weather-beaten, and weasoned countenance, and wasted limbs. Julian was, however, so careful to avoid giving his companion pain, that he endeavoured to humour him, by saying, that, "unquestionably, one bred up like Sir Geoffrey Hudson, in courts and camps, knew exactly when to suffer personal freedoms, and when to control them."

The little Knight, with great vivacity, though

with some difficulty, began to drag his seat from the side of the fire opposite to that where Julian was seated, and at length succeeded in bringing it near him, in token of increasing cordiality.

"You say well, Master Peveril," said the dwarf; "and I have given proofs of both bearing and forbearing.—Yes, sir, there was not that thing which my most royal mistress, Henrietta Maria, could have required of me, that I would not have complied with, sir; I was her sworn servant, both in war and in festival, in battle and pageant, sir. At her Majesty's particular request, I once condescended to become—ladies, you know, have strange fancies—to become the tenant, for a time, of the interior of a pye."

"Of a pye!" said Julian, somewhat amazed.

"Yes, sir, of a pye. I hope you find nothing risible in my complaisance?" replied his companion, something jealously.

"Not I, sir," said Peveril; "I have other matters than laughter in my head at present."

"So had I," said the dwarfish champion, "when I found myself imprisoned in a huge platter, of no ordinary dimensions you may be assu-

red, since I could lie at length in it, and when I was entombed, as it were, in walls of standing crust, and a huge cover of pastry, of size enough to have recorded the epitaph of a general officer or an archbishop. Sir, notwithstanding the conveniences which were made to give me air, it was more like being buried alive than aught else which I could think of."

"I conceive it, sir," said Julian.

"Moreover, sir," continued the dwarf, "there were few in the secret, which was contrived for the Queen's divertisement; for advancing of which I would have crept into a filbert nut, had it been possible; and few, as I said, being private in the scheme, there was a risk of accidents. I doubted, while in my darksome abode, whether some awkward attendant might not have let me fall, as I have seen happen to a venison pasty; or whether some hungry guest might not anticipate the moment of my resurrection, by sticking his knife into my upper crust. And though I had my weapons about me, young man, as has been my custom in every case of peril, yet, if such a rash person had plunged deep into the bowels of

the supposed pasty, my sword and dagger could barely have served me to avenge, assuredly not to prevent, either of these catastrophes."

"Certainly I do so understand it," said Julian, who began, however, to feel that the company of little Hudson, talkative as he shewed himself, was likely rather to aggravate than to alleviate the inconveniences of a prison.

"Nay," continued the little man, enlarging on his former topic, "I had other subjects of apprehension; for it pleased my Lord of Buckingham, his Grace's father who now bears the title, in his plentitude of court favour, to command the pasty to be carried down to the office, and committed anew to the oven, alleging preposterously that it was better to be eaten warm than cold."

"And did this, sir, not disturb your equanimity?" said Julian.

"My young friend," said Geoffrey Hudson, "I cannot deny it.—Nature will claim her rights from the best and boldest of us.—I thought of Nebuchadnezzar and his fiery furnace; and I waxed warm with apprehension.—But I thank Heaven, I also thought of my sworn duty to my

royal mistress; and was thereby obliged and enabled to resist all temptations to make myself prematurely known. Nevertheless, the Duke—if of malice, may Heaven forgive him—followed down into the office himself, and urged the master-cook very hard that the pasty should be heated, were it but for five minutes. But the master cook, being privy to the very different intentions of my royal mistress, did most manfully resist the order; and I was again reconveyed in safety to the royal table."

"And in due time liberated from your confinement, I doubt not?" said Peveril.

"Yes, sir; that happy, and I may say glorious moment, at length arrived," continued the dwarf. "The upper crust was removed—I started up to the sound of trumpet and clarion, like the soul of a warrior when the last summons shall sound—or rather, (if that simile be over audacious,) like a spell-bound champion relieved from his enchanted state. It was then that, with my buckler on my arm, and my trusty bilboa in my hand, I executed a sort of warlike dance, in which my skill and agility then rendered me pre-eminent, displaying, at

the same time, my postures, both of defence and offence, in a manner so totally inimitable, that I was almost deafened with the applause of all around me, and half drowned by the scented waters with which the ladies of the court deluged me from their casting-bottles. I had amends of his Grace of Buckingham also; for as I tripped a hasty morrice hither and thither upon the dining-table, now offering my blade, now recovering it, I made a blow at his nose—a sort of estramaçon—the dexterity of which consists in coming mighty near to the object you seem to aim at, yet not attaining it. You may have seen a barber make such a flourish with his razor. I promise you his Grace sprung back a half-yard at least. He was pleased to threaten to brain me with a chicken-bone, as he disdainfully expressed it; but the King said, 'George, you have but a Rowland for an Oliver.' And so I tripped on, shewing a bold heedlessness of his displeasure, which few dared to have done at that time, albeit countenanced to the utmost like me by the smiles of the brave and the fair. But well-a-day, sir, Youth, its fashions, its follies, its frolics, and all its pomp

and pride, are as idle and transitory as the crackling of thorns under a pot."

"The flower that is cast into the oven were a better simile," thought Peveril. "Good God, that a man should live to regret not being young enough to be still treated as baked meat, and served up in a pye!"

His companion, whose tongue had for many days been as closely imprisoned as his person, seemed resolved to indemnify his loquacity, by continuing to indulge it on the present occasion at his companion's expence. He proceeded, therefore, in a solemn tone, to moralize on the adventure which he had narrated.

"Young men will no doubt think one to be envied," he said, "who was thus enabled to be the darling and admiration of the court—(Julian stood self-exculpated from the suspicion)—and yet it is better to possess fewer means of distinction, and remain free from the back-biting, the slander, and the odium, which are always the share of court favour. Men who had no other cause, reflected upon me because my size varied somewhat from the common proportion; and jests

were sometimes unthinkingly passed upon me by those I was bound to, who did not in that case, peradventure, sufficiently consider that the wren is made by the same hand which made the bustard, and that the diamond, though small in size, outvalues ten thousand-fold the rude granite. Nevertheless they proceeded in the vein of humour; and as I could not in duty or gratitude retort upon *them*, I was compelled to cast about in my mind how to vindicate my honour towards those, who, being in the same rank with myself as servants and courtiers, nevertheless bore themselves towards me as if they were of a superior class in the rank of honour, as well as in the accidental circumstance of stature. And as a lesson to my own pride, and that of others, it so happened, that the pageant which I have but just narrated—which I justly reckon the most honourable moment of my life, excepting perhaps my distinguished share in the battle of Round-way-down—became the cause of a most tragic event, in which I acknowledged the greatest misfortune of my existence."

The dwarf here paused, fetched a sigh, big at

once with regret and with the importance becoming the subject of a tragic history; then proceeded as follows:—

"You would have thought in your simplicity, young gentleman, that the pretty pageant I have mentioned could only have been quoted to my advantage, as a rare masking frolic, prettily devised, and no less deftly executed; and yet the malice of the courtiers, who maligned and envied me, made them strain their wit, and exhaust their ingenuity, in putting false and ridiculous constructions upon it. In short, my ears were so much offended with allusions to pyes, puff-paste, ovens, and the like, that I was compelled to prohibit such subject of mirth, under penalty of my instant and severe displeasure. But it happ'd there was then a gallant about the court, a man of good quality, son to a knight baronet, and in high esteem with the best in that sphere, also a familiar friend of mine own, from whom, therefore, I had no reason to expect any of that species of gibing which I had intimated my purpose to treat as offensive. Howbeit, it pleased him one night at the Groom Porter's, being full of wine

and waggery, to introduce this threadbare subject, and to say something concerning a goose-pye, which I could not but consider as levelled at me. Nevertheless, I did but calmly and solidly pray him to choose a different subject; failing which, I let him know I should be sudden in my resentment. Notwithstanding, he continued in the same tone, and even aggravated the offence, by speaking of a tom-tit, and other unnecessary and obnoxious comparisons; whereupon I was compelled to send him a chartel, and we met accordingly. Now, as I really loved the youth, it was my intention only to correct him by a flesh-wound or two; and I would willingly that he had named the sword for his weapon. Nevertheless he made pistols his election; and being on horseback, he produced, by way of his own weapon, a foolish engine which children are wont, in their roguery, to use for spouting water; a—a—in short I forget the name."

"A squirt, doubtless," said Peveril, who began to recollect having heard something of this adventure.

"You are right," said the dwarf; "you have

indeed the name of the little engine, of which I have had experience in passing the yards at Westminster.—Well, sir, this token of slight regard compelled me to give the gentleman such language, as soon rendered it necessary for him to take more serious arms. We fought on horseback—breaking ground, and advancing by signal—and as I never miss aim, I had the misadventure to kill the Honourable Master Crofts at the first shot. I would not wish my worst foe the pain which I felt, when I saw him reel on his saddle, and so fall down to the earth!—and when I perceived that the life-blood was pouring fast, I could not but wish to Heaven that it had been my own instead of his. Thus fell youth, hopes, and bravery, a sacrifice to a silly and thoughtless jest; yet, alas! wherein had I choice, seeing that honour is, as it were, the very breath in our nostrils; and that in no sense can we be said to live, if we permit ourselves to be deprived of it."

The tone of feeling in which the dwarfish hero concluded his story, gave Julian a better opinion of his heart, and even of his understanding, than

he had been able to form of one who gloried in having, upon a grand occasion, formed the contents of a pye. He was indeed enabled to conjecture that the little champion was seduced into such exhibitions, by the necessity attached to his condition, by his own vanity, and by the flattery bestowed on him by those who sought pleasure in practical jokes. The fate of the unlucky Master Crofts, however, as well as various exploits of this diminutive person during the Civil Wars, in which he actually and with great gallantry commanded a troop of horse, rendered most men cautious of openly rallying him; which was indeed the less necessary, as, when left alone, he seldom failed voluntarily to shew himself on the ludicrous side.

At one hour after noon, the turnkey, true to his word, supplied the prisoners with a very tolerable dinner, and a flask of well-flavoured, though light claret; which the old man, who was something of a bon-vivant, regretted to observe, was nearly as diminutive as himself. The evening also passed away, but not without con-

tinued symptoms of garrulity on the part of Geoffrey Hudson.

It is true these were of a graver character than he had hitherto exhibited, for when the flask was empty, he repeated a long Latin prayer. But the religious act in which he had been engaged, only gave his discourse a more serious turn than belonged to his former themes, of war, lady's love, and courtly splendour.

The little Knight harangued, at first, on polemical points of divinity, and diverged from this thorny path, into the neighbouring and twilight walk of mysticism. He talked of secret warnings —of the predictions of sad-eyed prophets—of the visits of monitory spirits—and the Rosycrucian secrets of the Cabala; all which topics he treated of with such apparent conviction, nay, with so many appeals to personal experience, that one would have supposed him a member of the fraternity of gnomes, or fairies, whom he resembled so much in point of size.

In short, he persevered for a stricken hour in such a torrent of unnecessary tattle, as determined

Peveril, at all events, to endeavour to procure a separate lodging. Having repeated his evening prayers in Latin, as formerly, (for the old gentleman was a Catholic,) he set off on a new score, as they were undressing; and continued to prattle, until he had fairly talked both himself and his companion to sleep.

CHAPTER XII.

Of airy tongues that syllable men's names.
COMUS.

JULIAN had fallen asleep, with his brain rather filled with his own sad reflections, than with the mystical lore of the little Knight; and yet it seemed as if in his visions the latter had been more present to his mind than the former.

He dreamed of gliding spirits, gibbering phantoms, bloody hands, which, dimly seen by twilight, seemed to beckon him forward like errant-knight on sad adventure bound. More than once he started from his sleep, so lively was the impression of these visions on his imagination; and he always awaked under the impression that some one stood by his bed-side. The chillness of his ancles, the weight and clatter of the fetters, as he

turned himself on his pallet, reminded him on these occasions where he was, and under what circumstances. The extremity to which he saw all that was dear to him at present reduced, struck a deeper cold on his heart than the iron upon his limbs; nor could he compose himself again to rest without a mental prayer to Heaven for protection. But when he had been for a third time awakened from repose by these thick-stirring fancies, his distress of mind vented itself in speech, and he was unable to suppress the almost despairing ejaculation, "God have mercy upon us!"

"Amen!" answered a voice as sweet 'and soft as honey dew,' which sounded as if the words were spoken close by his bed-side.

The natural inference was, that Geoffrey Hudson, his companion in calamity, had echoed the prayer which was so proper to the situation of both. But the tone of voice was so different from the harsh and dissonant sounds of the dwarf's enunciation, that Peveril was impressed with the certainty it could not proceed from Hudson. He was struck with involuntary terror, for which he

could give no sufficient reason; and it was not without an effort that he was able to utter the question, "Sir Geoffrey, did you speak?"

No answer was returned. He repeated the question louder; and the same silver-toned voice, which had formerly said "*Amen*" to his prayers, answered to his interrogatory, "Your companion will not awake while I am here."

"And who are you?—What seek you?—How came you into this place?" said Peveril, huddling, eagerly, question upon question.

"I am a wretched being, but one who loves you well.—I come for your good.—Concern yourself no further."

It now rushed on Julian's mind, that he had heard of persons possessed of the wonderful talent of counterfeiting sounds to such accuracy, that they could impose on their hearers the belief, that they proceeded from a point of the apartment entirely opposite to that which the real speaker occupied. Persuaded that he had now gained the depth of the mystery, he replied, "This trifling, Sir Geoffrey, is unseasonable. Say what you have to say in your own voice and manner.

These apish pleasantries do not become midnight in a Newgate dungeon."

"But the being who speaks with you," answered the voice, "is fitted for the darkest hour, and the most melancholy haunts."

Impatient of suspense, and determined to satisfy his curiosity, Julian jumped at once from his pallet, hoping to secure the speaker, whose voice indicated he was so near. But he altogether failed in his attempt, and grasped nothing, save thin air.

For a turn or two, Peveril shuffled at random about the room, with his arms extended; and then at last recollected, that with the impediment of his shackles, and the noise which necessarily accompanied his motions, and announced where he was, it would be impossible for him to lay hands on any one who might be disposed to keep out of his reach. He therefore endeavoured to return to his bed; but, in groping for his way, lighted first on that of his fellow-prisoner. The little captive slept deep and heavy, as was evinced from his breathing; and upon listening a moment, Julian became again certain,

either that his companion was the most artful of ventriloquists and of dissemblers, or that there was actually within the precincts of that guarded chamber, some third being, whose very presence there seemed to intimate that it belonged not to the ordinary line of humanity.

Julian was no ready believer in the supernatural; but that age was very far from being so incredulous concerning ghostly occurrences as our own; and it was no way derogatory to his good sense, that he shared the prejudices of his time. His hair began to bristle, and the moisture to stand on his brow, as he called on his companion to awake, for Heaven's sake.

The dwarf answered—but he spoke without awaking,—"The day may dawn and be d—d. Tell the master of the horse I will not go to the hunting, unless I have the little black jennet."

"I tell you," said Julian, "there is some one in the apartment. Have you not a tinder-box to strike a light?"

"I care not how slight my horse be," replied the slumberer, pursuing his own train of ideas, which, doubtless, carried him back to the green

woods of Windsor, and the royal deer-hunts which he had witnessed there. " I am not overweight.—I will not ride that great Holstein brute, that I must climb up to by a ladder, and then sit like a pin-cushion on an elephant."

Julian at length put his hand to the sleeper's shoulder, and shook him, so as to awaken him from his dream; when, after two or three snorts and groans, the dwarf asked, peevishly, what the devil ailed him?

" The devil himself, for what I know," said Peveril, " is at this very moment in the room beside us."

The dwarf on this information started up, crossed himself, and began to hammer a flint and steel with all dispatch, until he had lighted a little piece of candle, which he said was consecrated to Saint Bridget, and as powerful as the herb called *fuga dæmonum*, or the liver of the fish burnt by Tobit in the house of Raguel, for chasing all goblins, and evil or dubious spirits, from the place of its radiance; " if indeed," as the dwarf carefully guarded his proposition, " they

existed any where, save in the imagination of his fellow-prisoner."

Accordingly, the apartment was no sooner enlightened by this holy candle's-end, than Julian began to doubt the evidence of his own ears; for not only was there no one in the room save Sir Geoffrey Hudson and himself, but all the fastenings of the door were so secure, that it seemed impossible that they could have been opened and again fixed, without a great deal of noise, which, on the last occasion at least, could not possibly have escaped his ears, seeing that he must have been on his feet, and employed in searching the chamber, when the unknown, if an earthly being, was in the act of retreating from it.

Julian gazed for a moment with great earnestness, and no little perplexity, first on the bolted door, then on the grated window; and began to accuse his own imagination of having played him an unpleasant trick. He answered little to the questions of Hudson, and returning to his bed, heard, in silence, a long studied oration on the merits of Saint Bridget, which comprehend-

ed the greater part of her long-winded legend, and concluded with the assurance, that, from all accounts preserved of her, that holy saint was the least of all possible women, except those of pigmy kind.

By the time the dwarf had ceased to speak, Julian's desire of sleep had returned; and after a few glances around the apartment, which was still illuminated by the expiring beams of the holy taper, his eyes were again closed in forgetfulness, and his repose was not again disturbed in the course of that night.

Morning dawns on Newgate, as well as on the freest mountain-turf which Welchman or wild-goat ever trod; but in so different a fashion, that the very beams of heaven's precious sun, when they penetrate into the recesses of the prison-house, have the air of being committed to jail. Still, with the light of day around him, Peveril easily persuaded himself of the vanity of his preceding night's visions; and smiled when he reflected that fancies, similar to those to which his ear was often exposed in the Isle of Man, had

been able to arrange themselves in a manner so impressive, when he heard them from the mouth of so singular a character as Hudson, and in the solitude of a prison.

Before Julian had awakened, the dwarf had already quitted his bed, and was seated in the chimney-corner of the apartment, where, with his own hands, he had arranged a morsel of fire, partly attending to the simmering of a small pot, which he had placed on the flame, partly occupied with a huge folio volume which lay on the table before him, and seemed well nigh as tall and bulky as himself. He was wrapped up in the dusky crimson cloak already mentioned, which served him for a morning gown, as well as a mantle against the cold, and which corresponded with a large montero cap, that enveloped his head. The singularity of his features, and of the eyes, armed with spectacles, which were now cast on the subject of his studies, now directed towards his little cauldron, would have tempted Rembrandt to exhibit him on canvass, either in the character of an alchemist or of a necromancer, en-

gaged in some strange experiment, under the direction of one of the huge manuals which treat of the theory of these mystic arts.

The attention of the dwarf was bent, however, upon a more domestic object. He was only preparing soup, of no unsavoury quality, for the breakfast, which he invited Peveril to partake with him. "I am an old soldier," he said, "and I must add, an old prisoner; and understand how to shift for myself better than you can do, young man.—Confusion to the scoundrel Clink, he has put the spice-box out of my reach!—Will you hand it me from the mantle-piece?—I will teach you, as the French have it, *faire la cuisine*; and then, if you please, we will divide, like brethren, the labours of our prison-house."

Julian readily assented to the little man's friendly proposal, without interposing any doubt as to his continuing an inmate of the same cell. Truth is, that although, upon the whole, he was inclined to regard the whispering voice of the preceding evening as the impression of his own excited fancy, he felt, nevertheless, curiosity to see how a second night was to pass over in the same cell; and

the tone of the invisible intruder, which at midnight had been heard by him with terror, now excited on recollection a gentle and not unpleasing species of agitation—the combined effect of awe, and of awakened curiosity.

Days of captivity have little to mark them as they glide away. That which followed the night which we have described, afforded no circumstance of note. The dwarf imparted to his youthful companion a volume similar to that which formed his own studies, and which proved to be a tome of one of Scuderi's now forgotten romances, of which Geoffrey Hudson was a great admirer, and which were then very fashionable both at the French and English courts; although they contrive to unite in their immense folios all the improbabilities and absurdities of the old romances of chivalry, without that tone of imagination which pervades them, and all the metaphysical absurdities which Cowley and the poets of the age had heaped upon the passion of love, like so many load of small-coal upon a slender fire, which it smothers instead of aiding.

But Julian had no alternative, saving only to

muse over the sorrows of Artamenes and Mandane, or on the complicated distresses of his own situation; and in these disagreeable divertisements, the morning crept through as it could.

Noon first, and thereafter night-fall, were successively marked by a brief visit from their stern turnkey, who, with noiseless step and sullen demeanour, did in silence the necessary offices about the meals of the prisoners, exchanging with them as few words as an official in the Spanish Inquisition might have permitted himself upon a similar occasion. With the same taciturn gravity, very different from the laughing humour into which he had been surprised on a former occasion, he struck their fetters with a small hammer, to ascertain by the sound thus produced, whether they had been tampered with by file or otherwise. He next mounted on a table, to make the same experiment on the window-grating.

Julian's heart throbbed; for might not one of these grates have been so tampered with as to give entrance to the nocturnal visitant? But they returned to the experienced ear of Master Clink,

when he struck them in turn with the hammer, a clear and ringing sound, which assured him of their security.

"It would be difficult for any one to get in through these defences," said Julian, giving vent in words to his own feelings.

"Few wish that—" answered the surly groom, misconstruing what was passing in Peveril's mind; "and let me tell you, master, folks will find it quite as difficult to get out." He retired, and night came on.

The dwarf, who took upon himself for the day the whole duties of the apartment, trundled about the room, making a most important clutter as he extinguished their fire, and put aside various matters which had been in use in the course of the day, talking to himself all the while in a tone of no little consequence, occasionally grounded on the dexterity with which an old soldier could turn his hand to every thing; and at other times, on the wonder that a courtier of the first rank should condescend to turn his hand to any thing. Then came the repetition of his accustomed prayers; but his

disposition to converse did not, as on the former occasion, revive after his devotions. On the contrary, long before Julian had closed an eye, the heavy breathing from Sir Geoffrey Hudson's pallet declared that the dwarf was already in the arms of Morpheus.

Amid the total darkness of the apartment, and with a longing desire, and at the same time no small fear, for the recurrence of the mysterious address of the preceding evening, Julian lay long awake, without his thoughts receiving any interruption, save when the clock told the passing hour from the neighbouring steeple of St Sepulchre. At length he sunk into slumber ; but had not slept, to his judgment, above an hour, when he was roused by the sound which his waking ear had so long expected in vain.

"Can you sleep ?—Will you sleep ?—Dare you sleep ?" were the questions impressed on his ear, in the same clear, soft, and melodious voice, which had addressed him on the preceding night.

"Who is it asks me the question ?" answered Julian. "But be the questioner good or evil,

I reply that I am a guiltless prisoner; and that innocence may wish and dare to sleep soundly."

"Ask no questions of me," said the voice; "neither attempt to discover who speaks with you; and be assured that folly alone can sleep, with fraud around and danger before him."

"Can you, who tell me of dangers, counsel me how to combat or how to avoid them?" said Julian.

"My power is limited," said the voice; "yet something I can do, as a glow-worm can shew a precipice. But you must confide in me."

"Confidence must beget confidence," answered Julian. "I cannot repose trust in I know not what or whom."

"Speak not so loud," replied the voice, sinking almost into a whisper.

"Last night you said my companion would not awake," said Julian.

"To-night I warrant not that he shall sleep," said the voice. And as it spoke, the hoarse, snatching, discordant tones of the dwarf were heard, demanding of Julian why he talked in his sleep—

wherefore he did not rest himself, and let other people rest—and finally, whether his visions of last night were returned upon him again?

"Say yes," said the voice, in a whisper, so low, yet so distinct, that Julian almost doubted whether it was not an echo of his own thought,—"Say but yes—and I part to return no more!"

In desperate circumstances men look to strange and unusual remedies; and although unable to calculate the chances of advantage which this singular communication opened to him, Julian did not feel inclined to let them at once escape from him. He answered the dwarf, that he had been troubled by an alarming dream.

"I could have sworn it, from the sound of your voice—" said Hudson. "It is strange, now, that you overgrown men never possess the extreme firmness of nerves proper to us who are cast in a more compact mould. My own voice retains its masculine sounds on all occasions. Dr Cockerel was of opinion, that there was the same allowance of nerve and sinew to men of every size, and that nature spun the stock out thinner or stronger, ac-

cording to the extent of surface which they were to cover. Hence, the least creatures are oftentimes the strongest. Place a beetle under a tall candlestick, and the insect will move it by his efforts to get out; which is, in point of comparative strength, as if one of us should shake his Majesty's prison of Newgate by similar struggles. Cats also, and weazels, are creatures of greater exertion and endurance than dogs or sheep. And in general, you may remark, that little men dance better, and are more unwearied under exertion of every kind, than those to whom their own weight must necessarily be burdensome. I respect you, Master Peveril, because I am told you have killed one of those gigantic fellows, who go about swaggering as if their souls were taller than ours, because their noses are nearer to the clouds by a cubit or two. But do not value yourself on this, as any thing very unusual. I would have you to know it hath been always thus; and that, in the history of all ages, the clean, tight, dapper, little fellow hath proved an over-match for his bulky antagonist. I need only instance, out of holy writ, the celebrated downfall of Goliah, and of another lubbard, who

had more fingers to his hand, and more inches to his stature, than ought to belong to an honest man, and who was slain by a nephew of good King David; and of many others whom I do not remember; nevertheless, they were all Philistines. And indeed you may observe, in sacred as well as profane history, that these giants are ever heretics and blasphemers, robbers and oppressors, outragers of the female sex, and scoffers at regular authority.* Such were Gog and Magog, whom our authentic chronicles vouch to have been slain near to Plymouth, by the good little Knight Corineus, who gave name to Cornwall. Ascaparte also was subdued by Bevis, and Colbrand by Guy, as Southampton and Warwick can testify. Such also was the giant Hoel, slain in Bretagne by King Arthur. And if Ryence, King of North Wales, who was done to death by the same worthy champion of Christendom, be not actually termed a giant, it is plain he was little better, since he required twenty-four kings beards, which were then worn full and long, to fur his gown; whereby, computing each beard at eighteen inches, (and you cannot allow less for a beard-royal,)

and supposing only the front of the gown trimmed therewith, as we use ermine; and that the back was mounted and lined, instead of cat-skins and squirrels' fur, with the beards of earls and dukes, and other inferior dignitaries—may amount to——But I will work the question to-morrow."

Nothing is more soporific to any but a philosopher or monied man, than the operation of figures; and when in bed, the effect is irresistible. Sir Geoffrey fell asleep in the act of calculating King Ryence's height, from the supposed length of his mantle. Indeed, had he not stumbled on this abstruse subject of calculation, there is no guessing how long he might have held forth upon the superiority of men of little stature, which was so great a favourite with him, that, numerous as such narratives are, the dwarf had collected almost all the instances of their victories over giants, which history or romance afforded.

No sooner had unequivocal signs of the dwarf's sound slumbers reached Julian's ears, than he began again to listen eagerly for the renewal of that mysterious communication which was at once in-

teresting and awful. Even whilst Hudson was speaking, he had, instead of bestowing his attention upon his eulogy on persons of low stature, kept his ears on watchful guard, to mark, if possible, the lightest sounds of any sort which might occur in the apartment; so that he thought it scarce possible that even a fly should have left it without its motion being overheard. If, therefore, his invisible monitor was indeed a creature of this world—an opinion which Julian's sound sense rendered him unwilling to renounce—that being could not have left the apartment, and he waited impatiently for a renewal of their communication. He was disappointed; not the slightest sound reached his ear; and the nocturnal visitor, if still in the room, appeared determined on silence.

It was in vain that Peveril coughed, hemmed, and gave other symptoms of being awake; at length, such became his impatience, that he resolved at any risk to speak first, in hopes of renewing the communication betwixt them. "Whoever thou art," he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by a waking person, but not so high as to disturb his sleeping companion—"Whoever, or

whatsoever thou art, that hast shewn some interest in the fate of such a cast-away as Julian Peveril, speak once more, I conjure thee; and be your communication for good or evil, believe me, I am equally prepared to abide the issue."

No answer of any kind was returned to this invocation; nor did the least sound intimate the presence of the being to whom it was so solemnly addressed.

"I speak in vain," said Julian; "and perhaps I am but invoking that which is insensible of human feeling, or which takes a malign pleasure in human suffering."

There was a gentle and half-broken sigh from a corner of the apartment, which, answering to this exclamation, seemed to contradict the imputation which it conveyed.

Julian, naturally courageous, and familiarized by this time with his situation, raised himself in bed, and stretched out his arm, to repeat his adjuration, when the voice, as if alarmed at his action and energy, whispered, in a tone more hurried than that which it had hitherto used, "Be still—move not—or I am mute for ever!"

" It is then a mortal being who is present with me," was the natural inference of Julian, " and one who is probably afraid of being detected ; I have then some power over my visitor, though I must be cautious how I use it.—If your intents are friendly," he proceeded, " there was never a time in which I lacked friends more, or would be more grateful for kindness. The fate of all who are dear to me is weighed in the balance, and with worlds would I buy the tidings of their safety."

" I have said my power is limited," replied the voice. " *You* I may be able to preserve—the fate of your friends is beyond my control."

" Let me at least know it," said Julian ; " and be it as it may, I will not shun to share it."

" For whom would you inquire ?" said the soft sweet voice, not without a tremulousness of accent, as if the question was put with diffident reluctance.

" My parents," said Julian, after a moment's hesitation ; " how fare they ?—What will be their fate ?"

" They fare as the fort under which the ene-

my has dug a deadly mine. The work may have cost the labour of years, such were the impediments to the engineers; but Time brings opportunity upon its wings."

"And what will be the event?" said Peveril.

"Can I read the future," answered the voice, "save by comparison with the past?—Who has been hunted on these stern and unmitigable accusations, but has been at last brought to bay? Did high and noble birth, honoured age, and approved benevolence, save the unfortunate Lord Stafford?—Did learning, capacity of intrigue, or high court favour, redeem Coleman, although the confidential servant of the heir presumptive of the Crown of England?—Did subtlety and genius, and the exertions of a numerous sect, save Fenwicke, or Whitbread, or any other of the accused priests?—Were Groves, Pickering, or the other wretches who have suffered, safe in their obscurity? There is no condition in life, no degree of talent, no form of principle, which affords protection against an accusation, which levels conditions, confounds characters, renders men's virtues their sins, and rates them as dan-

gerous in proportion as they have influence, though attained in the noblest manner, and used for the best purposes. Call such a one but an accessory to the Plot—let him be mouthed in the evidence of Oates or Dugdale—and the blindest shall foresee the issue of their trial."

"Prophet of Evil!" said Julian, "my father has a shield invulnerable to protect him. He is innocent."

"Let him plead his innocence at the bar of Heaven," said the voice; "it will serve him little where Scroggs presides."

"Still I fear not," said Julian, counterfeiting more confidence than he really possessed, "my father's cause will be pleaded before twelve Englishmen."

"Better before twelve wild beasts," answered the Invisible, "than before Englishmen, influenced with party-prejudice, passion, and the epidemic terror of an imaginary danger."

"Ill-omened speaker," said Julian, "thine is indeed a voice fitted only to sound with the midnight bell and the screech-owl. Yet speak again. Tell me, if thou canst"—(he would have said of

Alice Bridgenorth, but the word would not leave his tongue)—"Tell me," he said, "if the noble house of Derby——"

"Let them keep their rock like the sea-fowl in the tempest; and it may so fall out," answered the voice, "that their rock may be a safe refuge. But there is blood on their ermine; and revenge has dogged them for many a year, like a blood-hound that hath been distanced in the morning chase, but may yet grapple the quarry ere the sun shall set. At present, however, they are safe.—Am I now to speak further on your own affairs, which involve little short of your life and honour? or are there yet any whose interests you prefer to your own?"

"There is," said Julian, "one, from whom I was violently parted yesterday; if I knew but of her safety, I were little anxious for my own."

"One!" returned the voice, "only *one* from whom you were parted yesterday?"

"But in parting from whom," said Julian, "I felt separated from all happiness which the world can give me."

"You mean Alice Bridgenorth," said the In-

visible, with some bitterness of accent; "but her you will never see more. Your own life and her's depend on your forgetting each other."

"I cannot purchase my own life at that price," replied Julian.

"Then DIE in your obstinacy," returned the Invisible; nor to all the entreaties which he used was he able to obtain another word in the course of that remarkable night.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

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Page 227, line 13, *for* Fleet-Prison, *read* Newgate.